# JESUS *in the* EUCHARIST

GIRARDEY

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# JESUS
# IN THE EUCHARIST

BY
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# PREFACE

This booklet contains the author's articles on "The Real Presence," which appeared in *The Liguorian,* a monthly periodical published by the Fathers of the Redemptorist Seminary at Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. They are now given to the public in deference to the wishes of competent persons, who believe that their publication will contribute to enlighten and promote devotion in their readers towards the "Mystery of Faith."

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# JESUS IN THE EUCHARIST

## I

### THE PROMISE OF OUR DIVINE SAVIOR TO GIVE TO MEN HIS VERY FLESH TO EAT AND HIS VERY BLOOD TO DRINK

The Sixth Chapter of the Gospel of St. John begins with the narrative of an astounding miracle of our Savior, a miracle which was to prepare His disciples for the doctrine of the REAL PRESENCE. That miracle was the feeding and satiating of five thousand men with five ordinary loaves of bread and two fishes, and the gathering of twelve baskets full of their remnants after the multitude had satisfied their hunger. This great miracle made so deep an impression on the people that they were about to "take Him by force and make Him their king." But Jesus frustrated their design by escaping alone

into a mountain. When the evening came, His disciples entered their boat to go over the lake to Capharnaum.

"It was now dark," says the evangelist, "and Jesus had not come to them. And the sea arose, by reason of a great wind that blew. So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing near to the ship; and they were afraid. But He said to them: It is I, be not afraid. They were willing, therefore, to take Him into the ship; and presently the ship was at the land to which they were going. The next day the multitude that stood on the other side of the sea, saw that there was no other ship there but one, and that Jesus had not entered the ship with His disciples, but that His disciples had gone away. But other ships came in from Tiberias near to the place where they had eaten the bread, the Lord giving thanks. When the people, therefore, saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they took shipping, and came to Capharnaum, seeking for Jesus. And when they had found Him on the other side, they said to Him: Rabbi, when camest Thou hither?" (John 6: 16–25.)

By the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves

our Divine Savior wished to prepare his followers for the far more wonderful multiplication, if we may call it, of Himself in the Blessed Eucharist. By the miracle of His walking on the sea during a violent storm, which prevented the apostles from using their sail or making any headway by rowing, and then by causing the boat, as soon as He entered it, to land miles away at its very destination, Jesus wished to manifest His boundless power over nature and thus prepare their minds to admit the ineffable mystery of the Real Presence.

Let us now examine how Jesus answered the question of the Jews. "Jesus answered them and said: Amen, amen I say to you, you seek Me, not because you have seen miracles, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of man will give you. For Him hath God the Father sealed. They said therefore to Him: What shall we do, that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered and said to them: This is the work of God, that you believe in Him, whom He hath sent. They said therefore to Him: What sign dost Thou show that we may see, and may believe Thee? What dost Thou work? Our fathers ate manna in the desert, as it is

written: He gave them bread from heaven to eat" (John 6: 14–31).

We see from this passage of the Gospel, first, that our Divine Savior reminded His questioners that they followed Him out of selfish and material motives, for it was not truth or even miracles that they sought, for they now expected that He would, as on the day previous, feed them and provide for all their wants. Hence Jesus called their attention to the necessity they were under of seeking food rather for their souls, a food that would secure them, not a few years of mortal life, but life everlasting; a food which He the Son of God, would give them. They could depend on His word, for His heavenly Father had, like a notary with his seal, authenticated His divine mission by the testimony given at His baptism and by the power He had of working miracles. He then replied to their inquiry as to what they should do to perform God's will, by telling them of their obligation of believing in Him as the promised Messias, or Redeemer. But they were not satisfied with His answer, for they asked for a sign by which He should prove His mission, and, at the same time, they indicated the sign they wished to have, for they alluded to the manna, the food with which God had miraculously fed their

forefathers for forty years during the journey to the Promised Land. Moses, their leader and lawgiver, had foretold that his law was to last and be obligatory until another prophet and lawgiver like himself would come. Now, as Moses fed their forefathers in the desert with manna from heaven, they expected that the Great Prophet, the Messias, would also feed the people with bread from heaven. Wherefore, they now summoned Jesus to prove His claim of being the promised Messias, by providing them also with food from heaven, as Moses had done for their forefathers. Hence they said to Him:

"Our fathers ate manna in the desert, as it is written: He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen I say to you: Moses gave you not bread from heaven; but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven, for the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world" (John 6: 31–33).

There is an apparent contradiction between our Divine Savior's words and the quotation of the psalm calling the manna "bread from heaven." But the contradiction is merely apparent, and not real, for the psalm calls the manna "bread from

heaven," because it fell from the clouds, or what, in common parlance, is denoted as "the heaven" or "the heavens." Jesus wished to call the attention of His hearers to the Bread which He was to give them, as coming down in all reality from "heaven," the very home of God and His angels and saints. The Bread which He would give was so much the more excellent than the bread, or manna, of Moses, as the heaven where God reigns in His glory is infinitely more excellent, precious and noble than the clouds, or the heavens, whence fell the manna to feed the Israelites. The latter preserved the life of the body, and the former is destined to preserve and increase the life of the soul. Moreover, the manna was, in some manner, a pledge to the Israelites that God would lead them into the Promised Land; whilst the Bread from heaven promised by our Divine Savior, is for all His followers a pledge of life everlasting, a pledge that, after our death, He will lead us to heaven, our true country, our home.

"Then they said to Him: Lord, give us always this bread. And Jesus said to them: I am the Bread of life; he that cometh to Me, shall not hunger; and he that believeth in Me, shall never thirst. But I said to you, that you also have seen Me, and you

believe not. All that the Father giveth Me, shall come to Me, and him that cometh to Me, I will not cast out; because I am come down from heaven not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. Now this is the will of Him that sent Me, the Father, that all that He hath given Me, I lose not thereof, but raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of My Father who sent Me, that every one who seeth the Son and believeth in Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6: 34–40).

What Jesus said about the true Bread from heaven excited the desires of His hearers; therefore they asked Him to give them always this bread; but they meant only material food; wherefore Jesus, after telling them He was the Bread of life which satiated the hunger and quenched the thirst, He insists so much on the necessity of believing in Him as the Son of God. The fact was that, although the people honored Him greatly, they, nevertheless, lacked faith in Him and, in spite of His unquestionable miracles, they would not admit that He was the Son of God.

"Then the Jews murmured against Him, because He had said: I am the living Bread which came down from heaven. And they said: Is not this

Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How then saith He, I came down from heaven?" (John 6:41, 42).

They who call themselves Christians and, nevertheless, deny the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Eucharist, resemble the Jews who claimed to believe in the prophecies of Holy Scripture concerning the Messias, and yet would not acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Messias, but looked upon Him merely as the son of Joseph. In like manner, such Christians practically do not believe in the Divinity of the Savior, but believe only what they please of His words. Hence Jesus insists again and again on the obligation of believing in Him as the Son of God, and calls attention to the fact that the true faith in Him is a gift of God granted only to the humble, and not to the proud and conceited.

"Jesus therefore answered and said to them: Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to Me, except the Father, who hath sent Me, draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets: And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard of the Father, and hath learned, cometh to Me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, but He who is of God, He hath seen the Father. Amen, amen I say to you: he that

believeth in Me, hath everlasting life" (John 6: 43–47).

Our Divine Savior further on tells the Jews why it is that those who truly believe in Him have everlasting life, and how He will raise them gloriously at the last day.

"I am the Bread of life," He continues: "your fathers ate manna in the desert and they died," for they ate only material food, which could not impart immortality. But "this is the Bread descending down from heaven, that, if any one eat of it, he may not die." That is, the Bread which I will give is a spiritual food which imparts spiritual life, which confers immortality and perfect happiness to the soul, and fits the body for a glorious resurrection, by incorporating it in the mystical body of Jesus Christ. "I am the living Bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the Bread which I will give is My flesh for the life of the world" (5:48–52).

Here our Divine Savior speaks in the clearest terms. He tells us that He Himself is the Bread from heaven which it behooves us to eat, that we may possess everlasting life; that the Bread which He will give us to eat, will not be mere material bread, but will be the very flesh which He would

later on sacrifice for the salvation of the world. And yet there are men who pretend to believe in Christ's infallible word, and yet flatly contradict His very words, for Jesus promises to give a Bread which is His very flesh, and they maintain that He promised to give merely material bread.

"The Jews, therefore, debated among themselves, saying: How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" (John 6:53).

The language of the Jews proves that they had understood that Jesus intended to give His very flesh as food. Had they mistaken His meaning, Jesus would, most assuredly, have corrected their mistake, as He did later in another point. But, far from now correcting them and telling them that He did not intend to give His very flesh as food, He confirms them in the meaning they attach to His words, and insists more strongly even than before, that He actually intends His very flesh and blood to be real food and drink.

"Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen I say to you: Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My

blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me. This is the Bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers ate manna and died. He that eateth this Bread shall live forever" (John 6:54–59).

By these words Jesus Christ clearly affirms that His flesh is real food and His blood real drink; that they who eat His flesh and drink His blood, shall have life everlasting. Words cannot be plainer than these. Deny the Real Presence, and you necessarily deny the very words of Jesus Christ, and are no longer a Christian, a believer in Christ, but an unbeliever, for, practically, you deny the veracity and, consequently, the divine mission of Jesus Christ.

"These things Jesus said in the synagogue in Capharnaum. Many, therefore, of His disciples, hearing it, said: This saying is hard, and who can hear it? But Jesus, knowing in Himself that His disciples murmured at this, said to them: Doth this scandalize you? If then you shall see the Son of man ascend where He was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the

words that I have spoken to you are the spirit and life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that did not believe, and who he was that would betray Him. And He said: Therefore did I say to you that no man can come to Me, unless it be given by My Father" (John 6:60–66).

The words of Jesus Christ: "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing" are alleged by Protestants as an unanswerable argument against the Real Presence. But they are woefully mistaken, for our Divine Savior, being infinite Wisdom and Truth, cannot contradict Himself. He had just said: "My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed"; and "the Bread which I will give is My flesh for the life of the world." Nothing can be more clear than these words. Deny the Real Presence, and you give the lie to these words of the Son of God. There is no alternative: either admit the Real Presence, or charge the Savior with either telling a lie or with not knowing what He was saying. What He afterwards said about the spirit and the flesh does not and cannot in the least contradict what He had previously expressed so clearly, but only shows that He was not to be understood in the

material sense given to His words by the carnal Jews. They said: "This saying is hard, and who can hear it?" Their words indicate that they understood Jesus in a carnal sense, for hearing Him say that His flesh was meat indeed, and His blood drink indeed, they imagined that Jesus intended that they should eat His flesh as they ate the flesh of cattle! Of course, this was not the meaning of our Lord, when He said that "the flesh," not His own body, but the carnal meaning they attached to it, "profiteth nothing"; hence His words must be understood in a more spiritual sense; in other words, He would give them His very flesh to eat, but not in the material manner they attached to His words. Moreover, He called their attention to the fact that the Real Presence would be still harder to believe after He would have returned to heaven. His words are a clear anticipated refutation of the Protestant doctrines on the Blessed Eucharist. Hence our Divine Savior did not at all contradict or take back what He had previously said about the Real Presence. He only insinuated to the Jews that they understood His words in too material a sense. Even after this explanation many would no longer believe in Him, for they remained obstinately at-

tached to their preconceived views and prejudices, and were not, therefore, disposed, like others more humble, to believe firmly all He said.

"After this many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him. Then Jesus said to the twelve: Will you also go away? And Simon Peter answered Him: Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we have believed and have known that Thou art Christ the Son of God" (John 6:67–70).

The doctrine of our Divine Savior concerning the Real Presence so shocked the Jews, even after His explanation, that many of His followers forsook Him. If Jesus did not intend to give to men His very body as their spiritual food, and His very blood as their spiritual beverage, He would, in all truth, have most clearly said so, and thus prevented so many of His followers from abandoning Him and going astray. Their doing so must, certainly, have greatly pained Him, for He turned to His apostles and asked them if they also intended to leave Him. But they remained faithful to their divine Master. Here we have another proof of the Primacy of St. Peter in matters of faith. Whenever there is question of faith, it is always St. Peter who speaks for all, just as it has always occurred in the Church of

Jesus Christ, the Pope, who is St. Peter's successor, speaks for the whole Church and the whole Church accepts his decision in all matters pertaining to man's salvation.

## II

### THE INSTITUTION OF THE BLESSED EUCHARIST IN THE GOSPEL

St. John, who so minutely and clearly relates the Divine Savior's promise of the Blessed Eucharist as the spiritual food of man's soul, makes no mention of its institution. The other three Evangelists relate it clearly in almost identical terms. He who conscientiously examines their testimony, will be convinced, that they all testify to the truth of the doctrine of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Eucharist.

St. Matthew 26: 26–28: "Whilst they were at supper Jesus took bread and blessed and broke and gave to His disciples and said: Take ye and eat, this is My body; and taking the chalice, He gave thanks, and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this, for this is My blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins."

St. Mark 14: 22–24: "Whilst they were eat-

ing, Jesus took bread, and blessing broke and gave to them and said: Take ye, this is My body. And having taken the chalice, giving thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And He said to them: This is My blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many."

St. Luke 22: 19–20: "Taking bread, He gave thanks and broke and gave to them, saying: This is My body, which is given for you. Do this for a commemoration of Me. In like manner the chalice also after He had supped, saying: This is the chalice, the New Testament in My blood, which shall be shed for you."

And now what was it that Jesus actually gave His apostles to eat? Was it bread? No, it could not be bread, for Jesus did not call it "bread," but called it "His body," for He said, "Take ye and eat, THIS IS MY BODY." Had it been bread, as it appeared to be, Jesus Christ could not and would not have said, "THIS IS MY BODY." Jesus Christ is God; He knows all things; He is Truth itself; He could not be mistaken; He could not utter a falsehood. Therefore, we must conclude that what He said was perfectly true. Hence, He, truly gave them His body to eat; mark, it was His true living body that He gave them to eat, for He said so;

it was His very body, for He expressly declared that He gave them to eat "MY BODY WHICH IS GIVEN FOR YOU," that is, which shall be sacrificed and shall die on the cross on the following day for the salvation of mankind.

The words Jesus Christ spoke over the chalice make this still more clear: "Drink ye all of this for this is My blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins." He expressly and clearly declared that He wished all His apostles to drink out of the chalice He held in His hands, not wine, but His real living blood which would be shed on the following day for the forgiveness of men's sins, for He said it: "THIS IS MY BLOOD." Moreover, He calls it the "blood of the New Testament." The Old Testament, or Covenant of God with the Israelites, was dedicated by the shedding of the blood of a victim, a lamb, and sprinkling it over the people; but the New Testament was to be dedicated also by the shedding of the blood of a victim, the blood of Jesus, the "Lamb of God (John 1:29), and His blood was to wash away the sins of mankind. And it was this very same blood which Jesus expressly declares was contained in the chalice over which He pronounced these words: "Drink ye all of this, for THIS IS MY

BLOOD of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins."

Here we have the fulfillment of the promise our Divine Savior had made a year previous: "THE BREAD WHICH I WILL GIVE IS MY FLESH for the life of the world. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever. Amen, amen, I say unto you: EXCEPT YOU EAT THE FLESH OF THE SON OF MAN AND DRINK HIS BLOOD, you shall not have life in you. *My flesh is meat indeed,* and *My blood is drink indeed.* He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me and I in Him. He that eateth this bread shall live forever" (John 6: 52–59). Therefore nothing can be more evident than the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Eucharist.

He who would give any other meaning to the words of our Divine Saviour, either in the promise He made of the Blessed Eucharist, or in the words He used in its Institution, would, therefore, distort the natural sense of His words and make Him contradict Himself. In order to justify their denial of the Real Presence, the translators of the version of the Bible, known as King James' Bible, did not shrink from corrupting the text of the Evangelists on the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist, for

they added thereto words which were calculated to show that Jesus Christ did not give to His apostles His body to eat or His blood to drink, but only a little bread to eat and a little wine to drink. How did they do this? By purposely interpolating the word *it,* where the Evangelists had not written it. They did it in this way: "Jesus took bread and blessed *it* and broke *it* and gave *it* to His disciples." Those who would read this version would conclude therefrom that Jesus took *bread* and blessed *the bread* and gave *the bread* to His disciples and nothing more than bread, whilst telling them to eat, for "*this is My body.*" They thus deceived all their followers, and represented Jesus to them as contradicting Himself, or telling a falsehood. What a terrible responsibility rests on those translators and their abettors for so grossly deceiving their readers and leading them into a most pernicious and damnable error!

But how could our Divine Savior cause a piece of bread to become His very body and a little wine to become His very blood? Let us recall to mind that our Savior, being God, is almighty. His words are not like our words. Our words go no further than to express our meaning, our thoughts, our intentions. But the words of God not only express

His meaning, but, as St. Ambrose declares, they are also *operative,* that is, His words actually *do, effect* and *perform what they mean.* For instance, when God, in the beginning of creation, said: "Let there be light," these His words actually brought light into existence without any further act or effort on His part. Hence St. Paul says: "The word of God is living and effectual" (Hebr. 4:12). This is evident also from the manner in which Jesus Christ performed miracles, saying, for instance, to the paralytic: "Arise, and walk;" to a blind man: "Be thou seeing;" to the dead Lazarus in the tomb: "Lazarus, come forth." These words produced their effect instantaneously. In like manner, when Jesus said over the bread He held: "This is My body," the bread at once became His true body, and there was no longer any bread in His hands, but only its external appearance. And when He pronounced over the wine in the chalice He held these words: "This is My blood of the New Testament," the wine had immediately become His true blood, and there was no longer wine in the chalice, but only its appearance. The words our Savior then used were the instrument which effected these most wonderful changes. This can present no difficulty to the Christian who really believes in our Savior's

divinity, who believes in the creation, in the miracles of Jesus Christ, and that the word of God is almighty (Wisd. 18:15).

Let us bear in mind that our Divine Savior instituted the Blessed Eucharist on the eve of His death for the salvation of mankind, after He had eaten His last Pasch with His apostles. He began by saying to His apostles: "With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer" (Luke 22:15). How could Jesus so ardently desire to eat that Pasch with His apostles if He did not intend before dying, to give them an extraordinary token of His love? And could that extraordinary token consist only of a little bread and wine, according to the explanation of those who reject the doctrine of the Real Presence? Had He not daily for three years eaten bread with His apostles? Why should eating it once more before dying create such an ardent desire on His part? Moreover, had He not promised a year previous to feed them with His own flesh and blood as the principle of imparting to them life everlasting, that is, eternal salvation? Deny the Real Presence, and you can show no proof that Jesus ever kept His promise of furnishing His disciples with the means of securing life everlasting. And yet He had declared: "Except you eat the flesh

of the Son of man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you" (John 6:54). Jesus could not have said so ardently: "with desire have I desired to eat this Pasch with you before I die," unless He was about to give His apostles, His Church, such a token, such a testimony of His boundless love towards them, as would, beyond all conception, surpass all the marks of love and affection He had hitherto bestowed on them. Let us also recall to mind that Jesus, as the Savior of men, had come on earth to abrogate the Law of Moses, a law of fear, and replace it by the law of love, the law of the children of God, which should last forever and most intimately unite us with our heavenly Father. To effect this, He wished to make us His brethren and to incorporate us as the adopted children of His Father and render us "partakers of the Divine Nature" (2 Pet. 1:4), and for this purpose He wished to feed us with His own flesh and blood in the Eucharist which He was about to institute as the greatest proof of His love for us.

It was, therefore, at the Last Supper that Jesus Christ, to fulfil the prophecies of the Old Testament, made the New Testament, or Covenant, the New Law for His Church which was to endure till the end of time. Wherefore, He was then about to

bequeath to His Church the means of saving mankind, of applying to them the merits and fruits of His passion and death. In short, it was at the Last Supper, which He had so ardently desired, that He made His last will. For the last time before His death He was speaking familiarly with His intimate friends, "to whom it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God" (Mark 4: 11). To them He spoke plainly, "without parables," for He was then instructing "His successors and representatives, who were to teach all nations" (Mat. 28: 19–20). Wherefore, He must have spoken to them clearly, simply, plainly, intelligibly, literally, without obscurity, without figures. What, then did He, could He mean when He said: "THIS IS MY BODY, WHICH IS GIVEN FOR YOU" (Luke 22: 19)? If it was NOT HIS BODY, how could He say "THIS IS MY BODY?" And to leave no doubt about His meaning, Jesus says expressly, "WHICH IS GIVEN FOR YOU." Was it only a "piece of bread" which Jesus then gave His apostles and which He gave up for them on the cross the next day? No, by no means, for on the following day He really and indeed sacrificed His own true, living body on the cross for the salvation of mankind. Therefore the plain, clear meaning of Jesus when

He said: "Take ye and eat, this is My body which is given for you" is this: "This is no longer bread, but My *very body,* which is to be sacrificed on the cross for you." And the plain meaning of Jesus when He said: "Drink ye all of this, for this is My blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many" is: "Drink ye all of this, for this is no longer wine, but *My true living blood,* which shall be shed for the salvation of mankind." The Real Presence cannot be expressed more clearly, more plainly, more appropriately, or more correctly. And surely our Divine Savior would not have taken all that trouble and used all these clear, simple and plain expressions, in order to give His apostles merely a piece of bread to eat and a little wine to drink, unless He intended to deceive them; and the Evangelists would not have so carefully and so minutely related the actions and words of Jesus, had there been question of only a little bread and wine! Moreover, if Jesus Christ then really intended to give and actually gave His apostles, as He had promised them a year previous, His own flesh to eat and His own blood to drink, could He have done so in words more appropriate or more effective than those He used at the Last Supper, saying: "THIS IS MY BODY, THIS IS MY BLOOD?"

## III

### THE TEACHING OF ST. PAUL ON THE REAL PRESENCE.— TRADITION

St. Paul expressly declares that Jesus Christ Himself had revealed to him the Institution of the Holy Eucharist. "I have received of the Lord," he writes, "that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread and giving thanks, broke and said: Take ye and eat; this is My body, which shall be delivered for you; this do for a commemoration of Me. In like manner, also the chalice, after He had supped, saying: This chalice is the New Testament in My blood; this do ye, as often as ye shall drink, for the commemoration of Me. For, as often as you shall eat this bread, you shall show the death of the Lord until He come" (1 Cor. 11: 23–26). These words, which are St. Paul's testimony of the revelation he received from our divine Savior Himself, prove beyond all doubt that Jesus Christ in instituting the Eucharist gave His apostles to eat not bread, but His very living body which

He was going to deliver to death for mankind on the following day; and that He gave them to drink, not wine, but His very living blood, which Jesus Himself declared to be the blood of the New Testament. The Old Testament, that is, the Covenant of God with the Israelites, was dedicated by sprinkling the people with the blood of the victim, a lamb, the figure of the Savior of mankind. The New Testament was dedicated on Good Friday by the shedding of the blood of Jesus, the Immaculate Lamb, and applying it to mankind; the partaking of the body and blood of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist would enable all recipients to participate in the merits of the death of the Savior. Moreover, the text of St. Paul also proves that Jesus Christ empowered His apostles, His Church, to change bread and wine, as He had done, into His living body and blood for the benefit of those who were to believe in Him, until Jesus would again come upon earth at the last day to judge all mankind.

But this is not all, for St. Paul further on uses such clear, forcible and awe-inspiring language as to impress deeply on all the doctrine of the Real Presence, the necessity of a due preparation for receiving the Holy Eucharist, and the horrid crime and terrible effects of its unworthy reception.

"Wherefore," he says, "whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself; and so let him eat of that bread and drink of the chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord" (1 Cor. 11:27-29). For those who deny the Real Presence, these words of St. Paul are an insolvable enigma. If the Blessed Eucharist is not the real body and the real blood of Jesus Christ, how could St. Paul declare that he who ventures to receive the Holy Eucharist, without the requisite condition of being free from the least grievous sin, would be guilty of a crime against the body and the blood of the Lord? And this crime, according to St. Paul, is most heinous, for, he says, "he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord." And why is this crime so grievous, as to cause the sinner to "eat and drink his own condemnation"? Because he uses that food and drink as if it were ordinary and merely material food and drink, and does not discern it, that is does not regard it and treat it as the very body and blood of the Lord. If the Eucharist were mere bread and

wine, it would not be so heinous a crime, so horrid a sacrilege to partake of it without "having proved oneself," that is, without having rendered oneself worthy by the removal or forgiveness of one's sins. But St. Paul expressly enjoins this "proving of oneself" as an indispensable obligation for the worthy reception of the Eucharist, for he says: "Let a man *prove himself,* and *so* let him eat of *that bread* and drink of the chalice." If the unworthy reception of the Eucharist is so horrid a crime as to draw down on the offender the very eating and drinking of his own condemnation, it must be because it is actually the horrible profanation of the very body and the very blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This proves beyond all doubt the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. The great Apostle of the Gentiles does not speak in such strong and terrible terms of any other sin, nor does he require so careful a preparation for the performance of any other act, however holy it may be. This should suffice to convince any fair-minded person that the Blessed Eucharist is really and indeed the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

St. Paul refers to the Real Presence in another passage of the same epistle in which he says: "The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the

communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord? For we, being many, are one bread, one body, all who partake of one bread" (1 Cor. 10: 16, 17). In this passage St. Paul states in the plainest words that the chalice really and substantially contains the blood of Christ, and that the real body of the Lord is received under the appearances of bread. But this is not all. St. Paul even goes so far as to declare that those who partake of the Eucharist become one body with Christ and with one another. In his epistles he maintains that the Christians with Jesus Christ form but one (mystical) body, of which Jesus is the Head and the individual Christians are the members. And here he tells us that the Eucharist, that is, the body of Christ received by the faithful, is the vital principle of the Christian body, the bond of union between all who partake of it and makes of them but one (mystical) body; and therefore the reception of the Eucharist is rightly called Communion, the efficient bond of the common union of the faithful with one another in Christ. Those who deny the Real Presence, deny not only the clear teaching of St. Paul, but also these effects attributed to Holy Communion by St. Paul who wrote under the inspiration of the Holy

Ghost, "the Spirit of Truth." Only a divine food is able to produce such admirable supernatural results of the mystical union of the faithful in one body among themselves and with Jesus Christ.

Next to the Scriptural proofs of the Real Presence, omitting for the present the dogmatical definitions of the Church, comes the testimony of all the various ancient liturgies. All of them, even the most ancient that can be traced back to the apostolic age, all testify to the faith in the Real Presence. The very offering of the Sacrifice of the Mass prescribed in them proves beyond all doubt the belief in the Real Presence. Moreover, the ancient liturgies and writings of Fathers of the Church testify to the faith of the primitive Christians in the Real Presence. What we now believe about the Real Presence and the other doctrines of the Catholic Church, is identically the very same that has been believed in all ages of the Church from the time of the apostles, for, like truth itself which is ever one and unchangeable, the doctrines of the Catholic Church have always been the same and have ever remained unchanged. This is easily proved by the testimony, the writings of the Fathers of the Church. But some one may say: "What do I care about what those ancient writers, the Fathers of the Church,

wrote on any subject? Their views can have no bearing on what we are to believe." To such a one we give this answer: The writings of the Fathers of the Church are of the greatest importance in religious matters, for they testify as to what was the faith of the Church at the time in which they were written; they are the competent witnesses of what the Christians believed in their time. He who reads these writings, finds out exactly what the Christians then believed, how they understood the various texts of Scripture, the words of our divine Savior and the writings of the apostles. The writings of the Fathers of the Church are unquestionable witnesses that, like Jesus Christ, her Founder, the Catholic Church is "the same yesterday, to-day and forever" (Hebr. 13:8). Why should we not be allowed to adduce the testimony of the Fathers of the Church in favor of our holy faith? Why should we be permitted to believe historians narrating events they themselves have not witnessed, and be forbidden to believe and adduce the testimony of those learned, holy and conscientious writers who testify to what they themselves have seen and personally known and believed. If lawyers and judges prove their views and their decisions by adducing the testimony of those who framed the laws and

of those who preceded them on the bench, why should not we be allowed to prove the oneness and sameness, in one word, the perfect identity of the Catholic faith in all centuries by the testimony and decisions of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church? If we find in their writings the identical doctrines which the Catholic Church now holds and teaches, it is a most conclusive proof that the faith of the Catholic Church has never varied, that it is unchangeable, and, therefore, true. This is in accordance with the teaching of even human reason and common sense.

The testimonies of the Fathers of the Church on the Real Presence would be far more numerous than they are, had it not been for the "discipline of the secret." In what did this discipline consist? The ancient pagans, like our modern atheists, were in their views so gross, coarse and material, that the Church, enlightened by God and by a wise experience, did not consider it prudent to publish to the pagan world some of the deepest mysteries of divine revelation, for fear of their being entirely misunderstood and shockingly misrepresented. The ineffable mystery of the Real Presence was one of these; its very meaning was entirely beyond the grasp, the comprehension of the base minds of the pagans,

just as it is now perfectly incomprehensible to our modern infidels. When writing on or referring to the Blessed Eucharist the early Christians of the first three centuries were usually so guarded in their words, that the pagans could not understand what they were referring to. Even converts were not instructed in this mystery until they had been baptized and had given proofs of fidelity to their faith. And yet history tells us that something of this grand mystery leaked out among the pagans, for they accused the Christians of feasting, at their religious meetings, on the flesh of an infant. Such was the explanation the pagans gave of the faith of the Christians in the Real Presence and of Holy Communion. This very calumny is a capital and conclusive proof of the faith of the early Christians in the Real Presence.

In some of the most ancient liturgies, containing the prayers, ceremonies, etc., of the Mass, we find, after the prayer to be delivered from evil, this invocation: "Christ Jesus, we eat Thy body crucified for us, we drink Thy blood shed for us." The meaning conveyed by these words clearly denotes faith in the Real Presence. The Fathers of the Church in their writings warn their readers and hearers not to credit the testimony of their corporal

senses, but to believe unhesitatingly and firmly the words of Christ declaring that what seems to be only bread and wine, is really His body and His blood; they admonish the faithful that Jesus wished to give Himself to us under the appearances of bread in order to enable us to submit our reason to faith in His words, and not to yield to the testimony of our senses, for were He to give Himself to us in His human nature as our food, it would be too repulsive to us. The Holy Fathers all declare the Blessed Eucharist a great miracle, an awe-inspiring mystery, an *adorable,* living inconsumable food, a most holy and incorruptible Bread, and that the *Lord Himself enters into all who eat it.* They unanimously require all Christians to *adore,* that is, to pay divine honor to the Blessed Eucharist. They expressly teach that they who receive it, are incorporated in Christ, that Christ, at the Last Supper, after consecrating the bread and wine, actually held Himself in His hands; that they who hold the Eucharist in their hands, really handle Jesus Christ Himself, and that the body and blood of Christ in Holy Communion impress immortality in the recipients and, as it were, ferment in them into a glorious resurrection at the last day. The teaching of the Holy Fathers on the Blessed Eucharist is therefore

identical with the faith and teaching of the Catholic Church in our own day.

We can draw another proof of the truth and unchangeableness of the Catholic doctrine of the Blessed Eucharist from the very enemies of the Catholic Church. *All the ancient Christian sects,* separated from the Catholic Church, that believe in the Divinity of Jesus Christ, also believe most firmly in the doctrine of the Real Presence; this proves that when they, each in its own time, left the Church, the universal belief of the Church in the Real Presence was the same as it is now; hence the faith of the Church in the Blessed Eucharist has never changed, and, consequently, it is the same as Jesus Himself taught His Apostles, and is true beyond all reasonable doubt.

## IV

### THE EARLY FATHERS OF THE CHURCH ON THE REAL PRESENCE

Every fair-minded person who reads the writings of the most ancient Fathers of the Church, will be convinced that the Christians of the first two centuries had a clear and firm faith in the Real Presence of the true body and blood of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist.

Testimony of St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch. The earliest Father of the Church who mentions the Holy Eucharist in his writings is St. Ignatius, a disciple of the apostles. A very ancient tradition informs us that Ignatius was a little child in the life-time of our divine Savior. Now we know that when, on a certain occasion the apostles were driving away the children crowding around our Lord, Jesus took up one of them in his arms, saying: "Suffer little children to come to Me, for of such is the kingdom of God. Amen I say unto you: Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom

of God as a little child, shall not enter into it" (Mark 10: 13–16); that is, if any one wished to enter heaven, he should become in humility, simplicity and innocence, like the little child He was holding in His arms. This little child, tradition tells us, afterwards became St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, whom the Emperor Trajan sent under guard to Rome to be there exposed to and devoured by wild beasts, out of hatred to the Christian religion and for the amusement of the Romans. On his long journey to Rome, St. Ignatius wrote several letters to exhort and encourage the Christians of various cities, and also one to the Christians in Rome, expressing his great desire of dying for Christ and beseeching them not to take any steps to prevent his martyrdom, which he declares to be his glory and happiness. In his letter to the Christians of Smyrna, where St. Polycarp, another disciple of the apostles, was bishop, St. Ignatius warns them against certain heretics of those days who would not believe in the Holy Eucharist, and says: "These heretics do not admit the Eucharist, because they do not acknowledge that the Eucharist is the very flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins." No words can express more clearly the Real Presence, for in these few words

St. Ignatius tells us that in the Eucharist there is really and truly the very flesh or body of Jesus Christ which suffered and died for our sins.

Testimony of St. Justin, Martyr: Let us now turn our attention to the writings of St. Justin, who also sealed his faith with his blood. He lived in the first half of the second century. He was a philosopher of the school of Plato. After due investigation and instruction he became a Christian. After his conversion he continued to profess philosophy and wear the usual philosopher's mantle. He had many controversies with pagan philosophers, and became an acknowledged champion of the Christian religion. When accused of being a Christian, he defended his faith even before the Roman Senate. He addressed two apologies of the Christian religion to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, and wrote several other works in defense of the Christian religion. His bold profession and defense of the faith were the cause of his martyrdom in the reign of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius in the year 165. In Chapter 66 of his First Apology he speaks of the Holy Eucharist as follows: "This food, which we call the Eucharist, no one is permitted to partake of, unless he believes that our teaching is true and has submitted to the ablution

for the forgiveness of sins (that is, has been baptized) and regeneration, and lives as Christ has commanded (that is, faithfully keeps the commandments), for we take this food, not as common bread, nor as common drink, but as Jesus Christ, our Savior, made flesh by the Logos (Word) had flesh and blood to effect our salvation, so have we been taught that also the food consecrated by the word of prayer ordained by Him, by which our blood and flesh are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh. This the apostles have handed down in their memoirs, called Gospels (declaring), that they were commanded to do this by these words: 'Do this in commemoration of Me, for this is My Body'; and in the same manner He took the chalice, and gave thanks and said: 'This is My blood,' and then gave them all to drink thereof."

This extract from St. Justin's First Apology testifies to the belief of the early Christians, one hundred years after our divine Savior's death, in the Real Presence. Every word of his unmistakably indicates this, for he plainly declares that in Holy Communion not mere bread and wine are received, but the very flesh and blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, "the Divine Word made flesh" for our

salvation, and that our own flesh and blood are nourished in Holy Communion with the very flesh and blood of the God-Man, Jesus Christ. In fact, if St. Justin were now living among us as one of us, he could not speak more clearly and more forcibly to express the faith of the Catholic Church in the Real Presence.

Testimony of St. Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons and Martyr: This saint was born in Asia Minor about the year 130. He was a disciple of St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who had been one of the favorite disciples of St. John the Evangelist, and for this reason was looked upon with great veneration by the whole Church in the second century. Irenæus was among the first missionaries sent into Gaul in the second half of the second century to convert its inhabitants to the Christian religion. When St. Pothinus, the first Bishop of Lyons, with a number of Christians, had suffered martyrdom for the faith, St. Irenæus was chosen to succeed him. In the year 204, he, with thousands of Christians, suffered martyrdom in the persecution of the Emperor Septimius Severus. Among his writings is a very important book entitled, "Against Heresies," in which he enumerates and refutes the heresies of his time and takes the stand that "no

one can be orthodox in the faith, unless he be in communion with the *Bishop of Rome.*" In this work there are two passages relating to the Real Presence, in which he says: "How do those heretics say that that flesh which is nourished with the Lord's blood and body, becomes corrupt and does not receive life? . . . How do they deny that our flesh, which is nourished with the Lord's blood and body, is capable of receiving the gift of God, namely, eternal life?" To understand the saint's meaning, we should bear in mind that among the heretics St. Irenæus was refuting, there were some who denied the resurrection of the body and the capability of the body to enjoy the happiness of heaven. To refute them the saint recalled the fact, taught by Jesus Himself, that man's flesh (that is, body), which in Holy Communion is nourished with the body and blood of Christ, is thereby rendered capable of resurrection and of enjoying heavenly bliss, for, he says, "Did not the Savior Himself tell us that the reception of His body and blood would be the pledge of a glorious resurrection and of the consequent enjoyment of life everlasting? 'This is the will of my Father, who sent Me, that every one who seeth the Son and believeth in Him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up

at the last day. I am the Bread of life. . . . If any man eat of this Bread, he shall live forever, and the Bread which I will give is My flesh for the life of the world. . . . He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day.'" (John 6.) All this shows us clearly that the early Christians not only believed in the Real Presence, but also considered Holy Communion as the pledge of a glorious resurrection and of the heavenly reward, just as our Catechism now teaches us.

Testimony of Tertullian: Tertullian lived in the second half of the second century and in the first quarter of the third. Before becoming a priest he had been married and had practised law. He was a man of great talent and learning. His great work is entitled, "On Prescription," against heresies, refuting them by the argument known in judiciary proceedings by the name of Prescription, or as we popularly express it: "Possession is nine points of the law, and a person in possession of a thing cannot be lawfully dispossessed of it without clear and adequate proof that he has no right to it." In this work Tertullian proves that heresy cannot claim to be the doctrine of Christ, because the Church from the beginning has possessed the true

doctrine of Christ. But Tertullian, in spite of his learning and masterly ability, had failed to master himself, and therefore being disappointed in his ambitious aspiration and spurred on by his excessive rigorism, he fell into heresy, teaching among other errors that there should be no forgiveness to those who had fallen into great crimes, such as apostacy, murder, etc. He had previously refuted in his great work "On Prescription" his own errors. Nevertheless, in his former orthodox works, he is a genuine witness of the faith of the early Church in the Real Presence. "Christ," he writes, "taking bread and distributing it to His disciples, made it His own body by saying: 'This is My body.' . . . Our flesh feeds on the body and blood of Christ, in order that our soul may thrive on God." By these words he clearly declares that the Holy Eucharist is really the body and blood of Jesus Christ and the spiritual nourishment of our souls. This is the very teaching of the Church on the Real Presence.

## V

### THE BELIEF OF THE CHURCH IN THE REAL PRESENCE IN THE THIRD CENTURY

The principal writers in the third century who testified to the faith of the Church in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist are: the martyr, St. Hippolytus of Rome; St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage and martyr; and Origen of Alexandria, the most celebrated of the three.

I. St. Hippolytus, who suffered a most painful martyrdom in the year 235, was one of the ablest writers of his century. He refers in one of his books to the Holy Eucharist in the following words: "The Word (that is, the Son of God) prepared His precious and immaculate body and His blood, which are daily prepared (that is, offered) as a sacrifice on the mysterious divine table (altar) in commemoration of that first table of the mystic divine Supper (the Lord's Supper), saying: 'Come, eat My bread and drink the wine which I have mingled for you.' He hath given us His own divine flesh and His own precious blood to eat and drink."

These words of St. Hippolytus clearly denote not merely that our divine Savior actually gave to His apostles at the Last Supper His true body and His true blood to eat and drink, but also that the *very same* was then done in the Church in the holy Sacrifice of the Mass as a renewal and commemoration of that which our Lord Jesus Christ had done at the Last Supper. This is a proof that the doctrine and practice of the Church in the third century was essentially the same as it is in our own time.

II. Origen, one of the greatest geniuses the world has ever seen, was born in the year 185 at Alexandria in Egypt. His father, the martyr St. Leonidas, caused him from his very boyhood to study daily a chapter of the Bible, and to learn how to explain it. He was not quite seventeen years old when a violent persecution broke out and his father was arrested as a Christian and put to the torture to compel him to give up his faith. Origen was so eager for martyrdom that he intended to go to the pagan magistrate and publicly proclaim himself a Christian, and thus have himself arrested and put to death for the faith, and so share his father's martyrdom. But he was prevented from doing so by his mother, who hid his clothes so well that Origen could not leave the house. But Origen

wrote a beautiful and eloquent letter to his father to encourage him to suffer and die for the faith of Jesus Christ. So great was Origen's learning and ability that when he was only eighteen years old, the Bishop of Alexandria placed him in charge of the Catechetical School of Alexandria, which had acquired great celebrity under the famous Clement of Alexandria. Origen not only kept up the renown of the school, but even greatly increased it by his able lectures on philosophy and religion. Not only Christians, but also pagans flocked to it in great numbers, even from distant countries, and very many were the conversions of pagans; and there came forth from Origen's school many saints, martyrs, prominent bishops and priests and learned teachers. He was over sixty-five years old in 251 when the persecution broke out; he was imprisoned and courageously underwent fearful tortures for the faith, and finally at the end of the persecution he was set free, indeed, but his health was shattered and he died in consequence two or three years later.

The authority of Origen in testifying to the faith and practice of the Church in his time, is so weighty that no sane man can gainsay his testimony. In his Homily on the cure of the centurion's servant by our divine Savior he says:

1. "When thou enjoyest the bread and beverage of life (that is, Holy Communion), thou eatest and drinkest the body and blood of the Lord; then does the Lord enter under thy roof; and thou, therefore, humbling thyself, imitate the centurion and say: 'Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof.' When the Lord enters an unworthy recipient (communicant), He enters to pass judgment" (that is, condemnation). These words of Origen prove that the Christians of his days held the doctrine of the Real Presence, and firmly believed that the words of Jesus Christ, 'This is My body, This is My blood,' were to be taken in their plain, literal sense; and that those who received Holy Communion unworthily profaned the very body and blood of Jesus Christ and, as St. Paul declares, 'ate and drank their own condemnation.'"

2. In the early days of the Church the custom in receiving the body of our Lord in holy Communion was to receive it in one's hand; then men received it from the celebrant in their bare hand, the women in their hand covered with a veil or a fine piece of linen; and in times of persecution they were allowed to bring the Sacred Host to their homes and to communicate themselves. This was, of course, not allowed to the catechumens, but only to the baptized.

In fact, in the first four centuries none but the baptized were even instructed in the holy Eucharist and permitted to assist at holy Mass after the Offertory. In the following passage from Origen, taken from one of his sermons, he addresses only the baptized, saying: "You who are wont to assist at the divine mysteries know how, when receiving the body of Christ, you preserve it with all care and veneration, lest any particle of it should fall down, lest any part of the consecrated gift should slip away, for you charge yourself as guilty of sin, if any of it falls down through your carelessness."

This wonderful reverence of the early Christians is an unquestionable proof of their firm belief in the Real Presence. Similar passages may be found in the works of other Christian writers.

3. In another work Origen speaks of the manna, the daily food which God gave the Israelites journeying for forty years in the desert on their way to the Promised Land, as a figure of the Holy Eucharist, the food which Jesus Christ gives our soul on her way to heaven, her Promised Land. Among other things Origen says: "Therefore the manna is a food figuratively; but now the flesh of the Word of God (Jesus Christ) is in the species

(of bread) a true food, as He Himself says: 'My flesh is meat indeed.'" The contrast which Origen makes between the manna and the Blessed Eucharist is an evident proof of his belief that the flesh of Jesus Christ is really present as food in the Holy Eucharist.

III. St. Cyprian was converted from paganism to Christianity by Cecilius, a priest of Carthage. In the course of time he was ordained a priest, and after a few years he became Bishop of Carthage, and governed his diocese with great zeal and wisdom. When the persecution broke out in the year 251, after the Church had been left in peace for thirty-eight years and the number of Christians had greatly increased in the meantime, then the saying of the prophet was verified: "Thou hast multiplied the nation, and hast not increased the joy" (Is. 9: 3), for the faith, virtue and constancy of the Christians did not increase in the same proportion as their number. Far from it, for in that persecution many apostatized, especially in Northern Africa. Some openly apostatized, gave up the faith and actually took part in the idolatrous pagan rites, rather than suffer the torments of martyrdom. Others even forestalled their arrest as Christians and went and declared themselves as pagans and

offered incense to the idols. Others again betook themselves to the magistrates, and bribed them to give them a certificate of having offered incense to the idols, although they had not done so. When the persecution began to relax, the majority of these apostates, without doing any of the penances required for such crimes, insisted on assisting at the Holy Sacrifice and partaking of Holy Communion. Some priests were weak enough to yield to their demands. Moreover, a number of the apostates had obtained from one of the martyrs, after he had already undergone torments, and before his execution, a writing recommending the indulgence of the Church towards said apostates, and these persons insisted that, by virtue of said recommendation, they should be dispensed from all penance and be admitted at once to receiving Holy Communion. St. Cyprian, as his duty required, did all he could by preaching and by writing to put an end to such abuses and profanations. He relates a number of examples of divine punishment of the guilty. A man was struck dumb immediately after his apostasy. Another apostate, having tasted a piece of one of the victims of the pagan sacrifices, at once went mad and gnawed off his own tongue. In St. Cyprian's own presence an infant, that his nurse had

brought to a pagan altar to taste of the idolatrous sacrifice, was brought to receive Holy Communion, as was often done in the early ages of the Church in the case of infants; but at once, as if in great torture, it threw up the Sacred Species. An old woman, who had apostatized, fell down in convulsions in venturing to receive Holy Communion. In his writings against the apostates, St. Cyprian declares that "these people assail the body of the Lord; they do violence to His body and blood; and now with their hands (in which the Holy Eucharist is placed) and mouth they sin far more against the Lord than when they denied Him" (that is, apostatized).

The belief in the Real Presence can hardly be more strongly or more clearly expressed. By receiving Holy Communion unworthily, says St. Cyprian, those apostates attack and do violence to the Lord Himself; but this they could not do unless the Lord's body and blood are really and substantially present in the Holy Eucharist. Moreover, how could an unworthy Communion be a greater crime than the denial of Jesus Christ through fear of torment, if the Savior's true body and true blood are not really present in the Holy Eucharist?

In another work St. Cyprian gives an explanation of the Lord's Prayer. In explaining the petition: "Give us this day our daily bread," St. Cyprian says: "We beg our bread, that is, Christ Himself, that He may be given to us every day, in order that we, who remain and live in Christ, may not recede from His sanctification and His body." By these words St. Cyprian asserts his belief in the Real Presence, and that he considers the Holy Eucharist as the daily nourishment of our soul, and as a necessary means to keep our soul in sanctification, that is, in the state of grace, and preserve it as a living member of the body of Christ, that is, of the Church, of which Jesus Himself is the head and we are the members. Do not these words of St. Cyprian remind us of our late Holy Father Pius X who so strenuously recommends to us all daily Holy Communion?

St. Cyprian in the next persecution could have concealed himself, but he would not and was therefore apprehended and in the year 258 suffered martyrdom by being beheaded for the faith he had so zealously upheld and defended.

## VI

### ST. HILARY AND ST. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM ON THE REAL PRESENCE

I. St. Hilary was born in the beginning of the fourth century and owing to his great merits was made bishop of Poitiers. He was one of the most prominent bishops of his time in Gaul on account of his holiness, learning and zeal for the defense of the Catholic faith against Arianism, a heresy which denied the divinity of Jesus Christ. On account of his masterly defense of the divinity of our Savior, the Arian emperor Constantius banished him to Asia and left nothing undone to induce him to embrace Arianism. But St. Hilary so well championed the cause of the true faith, that the Arians, seeing themselves overcome by Hilary in their councils, and fearing his continued success in bringing so many Arians back to the Church, prevailed on the emperor to send him back to Gaul. His return was hailed with demonstrations of joy all over Gaul, and he soon turned his attention to

restoring religious peace in that country by refuting and converting the Arians. He died in 368. His able writings and his defense of the faith won for him the title of Doctor of the Church. He is a powerful witness of the faith of the Church in the Real Presence, as we shall see by two passages of his writings. The first passage, though short, is very conclusive.

1. "The word was truly made flesh, and we truly receive the Word made flesh in the Lord's food" (that is, in Holy Communion).

These words clearly denote that St. Hilary holds the Real Presence to be just as true as the Incarnation of the Son of God. Of course, those who do not believe in the mystery of the Incarnation, that is, that Jesus Christ is truly and really the Son of God made man, will not admit the Real Presence, such persons can have no genuine claim to be or to be called Christians. We will now proceed to the second extract from the writings of St. Hilary.

2. "We should not speak of things divine in a merely human or worldly manner. Let us read the things that are written and endeavor to grasp their real meaning, and then we shall discharge the office of a perfect faith. In speaking of the natural truth of Christ in us, we speak foolishly or

without reverence, unless we learn the truth from Him (that is, unless we understand His words in the sense He Himself attached to them). For He said: 'My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed; he that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me and I in him.' There is no room left to doubt of the reality of His flesh and blood (in the Eucharist). For now by the Lord's own declaration and by our own faith, it (the Eucharist) is His true flesh and His true blood, and the receiving of these has the effect that we are in Christ and Christ is in us, and is not this really true? Those, indeed, who deny the divinity of Jesus Christ, do not hold this as true. Therefore, He Himself is in us through His flesh, and we are in Him, whilst that which we are with Him is in God. That we are really in Him through the communion of His flesh and blood, He Himself testifies in these words: And this world does not see Me, but you shall see Me, because I live and you shall live, since I am in My Father, and you are in Me and I in you. That this natural union exists in us, He Himself thus testified: He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood dwelleth in Me and I in him. No one can be in Jesus, unless Jesus be in him; Jesus will take up the flesh of him

only who shall have received His. He had already previously taught the sacrament (or mystery) of this union in these words: As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father; and he that eateth My flesh, the same shall live by Me. Jesus, therefore, lives by the Father, and in the same manner in which He lives by the Father, in like manner also do we live by His flesh."

The words of St. Hilary are very remarkable. In the first place, he calls our attention to the fact that, in order to understand the meaning of the words of our divine Savior, we must not consider our own views, or notions, or theories, but we must seek to understand them in the sense which Jesus Christ attached to them. He that insists on understanding them in his own way without regard to Christ's real meaning, is both foolish and impious. This is conclusive against those who pretend to interpret Holy Scripture in accordance with their private judgment. What we should especially consider in the words of St. Hilary is the assertion that we cannot *live by Christ*, as Christ declares we should, in order to be saved (John 6:58), unless we receive this life by partaking of His real flesh and blood. St. Hilary, moreover, shows that our divine Savior compares the union between

those who receive His true flesh and blood, to the union existing between Jesus and His heavenly Father. How beautiful, how grand must such a union be! Without the Real Presence such an intimate union could not be effected by Holy Communion. In the next place, St. Hilary calls our attention to the fact that only those deny the Real Presence, who deny the Divinity of Jesus Christ. This is perfectly true, although some who deny the Real Presence, declare that they believe in Christ's Divinity; but notwithstanding their claim, they have a false conception of the mystery of the Incarnation, and consequently do not believe it in its full meaning. By the Incarnation the Son of God united Himself to our human nature; by Holy Communion He unites Himself to each individual recipient, and makes him an individual partaker of the benefits, which the Incarnation and Redemption bestowed on human nature, and gives a pledge to each individual recipent of a glorious resurrection and of eternal life in heaven, as He Himself declares: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up on the last day" (John 6:55).

II. Let us now consider the testimony of St. Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem and Doctor of the

Church, on the Real Presence. Cyril was born in the year 310. After his ordination to the priesthood he was entrusted with the office of instructing converts and explaining the doctrines of our holy faith to the people. In the performance of this noble and holy task he wrote his admirable catechetical instructions, in which he clearly explains and victoriously defends the mysteries of the Christian religion against all the infidels and heretics of his time. Although he lived nearly sixteen hundred years ago, when we read his works, we would feel inclined to imagine that we are reading the works of St. Alphonsus, or of some eminent theologian of our own epoch. Shortly after he was made bishop of Jerusalem, a wonderful event took place, which lasted a whole day. A luminous cross, brighter than the sun, appeared in the heavens in the day-time from one end of Jerusalem to the other, and was seen by both Christians and pagans. The Arians had raised a furious persecution against the Church, and with the help of the Arian emperor succeeded in causing the banishment of the most holy and prominent Catholic bishops from their sees; among these was St. Cyril. He suffered much in his banishment. After the death of Constantius, Cyril returned to Jerusalem. Soon after

the new emperor, Julian the Apostate, who out of hatred to the religion of Christ, which he intended to destroy, undertook to disprove the prophecy of Jesus Christ, in which He foretold the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem, saying: "They shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone" (Luke 19:44). Julian therefore invited the Jews all over the world to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. The Jews hastened eagerly to comply with Julian's invitation. They joyfully set to work clearing the ground with silver and golden pickaxes and other tools; even the rich Jewish ladies carried away the earth in their silk aprons, and all the Jews contributed either labor or money to carry out the emperor's intentions. At last the laborers reached the lowest stones of the foundation, which had never yet been removed, and which they now removed, fulfilling thereby Christ's prophecy to the very letter, that "not a stone would remain on a stone." When all the remains of the old foundation had been taken away, the Jews aided by the emperor's skilled workmen began to lay the proposed new foundations, but were soon unable to make any headway, for earthquakes overthrew their work, globes of fire darted forth from the ground, scattered the workmen and consumed all that was

combustible on the grounds. These wonderful occurrences were repeated every time the Jews attempted to resume the work, so that they had at last to give it up in despair, to their great distress, and to the confusion of Julian the Apostate and the other enemies of the Christian religion. St. Cyril continued to defend the Christian religion against all its enemies until his death in the year 381. Let us now consider his admirable testimony in favor of the Real Presence.

"The very doctrine of St. Paul," he declares, "abundantly suffices to make us believe the divine mysteries, which render us worthy to become, so to speak, relatives of Jesus Christ both in body and blood. For this apostle clearly proclaims that our Lord Jesus Christ on the night, in which He was betrayed, took bread and, giving thanks, gave to His disciples saying: Take ye and eat, this is My body. And taking the chalice and giving thanks, He said: Take ye and drink, this is My blood. Now, since He Himself declared and said: This is My body, who will henceforth dare to deny it? And since He Himself so positively said: This is My blood, who will ever doubt it and say that it is not His blood? Jesus had previously at Cana of Galilee changed water into wine, which has

some relationship (or similarity) to blood; and shall we esteem Him unworthy of being believed when He changed wine into blood? Having been invited to those nuptials where bodies are united, He performed the aforesaid miracle which no one expected; and shall not we be most firmly convinced, that He gave us His body and blood for our nourishment, and perfectly certain that we are receiving His very body and blood? For He gives us His very body in the species of bread, and His very blood in the species of wine, so that when thou tastest the body and blood of Christ, thou becomest a partaker of His very body and blood. Thus we become '*Christiferi*,' that is, we are bearers of Christ in our bodies, when we receive His body and blood into our members; hence, according to St. Peter, 'we are made partakers of the divine nature' (2 Peter 1:4). Formerly Christ, disputing with the Jews, said: Unless you eat My flesh and drink My blood, you shall not have life in you. But the Jews, not taking these things in a spiritual sense, were shocked and forsook Him, for they imagined He invited them to feast on His flesh as if it were (the) flesh (of animals). In the Old Testament there were the loaves of proposition; but these have been abolished together with it. In

the New Testament the bread is heavenly, and the chalice is salutary, for they sanctify our body and soul. Therefore I do not wish thee to consider them as merely simple bread and merely simple wine, because *they are the body and blood of Christ.* For although thy *senses* tell thee that they are mere bread and wine, nevertheless let faith confirm thee (in the belief that they are really the body and blood of Christ). Do not judge of the thing by its taste; but let faith make thee certain beyond even the shadow of a doubt, that thou art made worthy to become a *partaker of the body and blood of Christ.*"

These clear, beautiful and strong words of St. Cyril, the great catechist of the fourth century, are an unanswerable proof that the faith of the Church of his time in the Real Presence is identical with that of the Church of the twentieth century.

## VII

### ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ON THE REAL PRESENCE

This great saint and Doctor of the Church received the surname of Chrysostom, a Greek word which signifies "golden mouth," on account of his wonderful eloquence. He attained celebrity as the greatest orator of his day when a simple priest at Antioch, where for twelve years he preached regularly homilies, or sermons, explaining the Holy Scriptures and doctrines of the Church, to immense crowds that flocked to hear him. His piety and learning and zeal were equal to his eloquence. It was for this reason that he was raised to the dignity of bishop of the very important See of Constantinople. As bishop he continued to preach, as before, with apostolic freedom and courage, without human respect, against error and vice. This drew upon him the envy and hatred of the great and powerful and of the Empress Eudoxia, a very vain and worldly-minded and unscrupulous woman, who pre-

vailed upon a faction of courtier-bishops to condemn him under frivolous pretexts. In consequence of this the imperial government banished him to a wild and unhealthy region. St. John Chrysostom appealed to the Pope against his unlawful condemnation by the aforesaid bishops; the Pope took up his case and after due examination annulled the action of those unworthy bishops. But in the meantime St. John Chrysostom succumbed in exile to ill-treatment and sickness after much suffering borne with saintly patience, in 407. His appeal to the Pope against the injustice of his enemies is an unquestionable proof, that in the early ages of the Church, the Papal Supremacy in the Church was universally acknowledged, as well as in our own times.

Let us now see what St. John Chrysostom teaches about the Real Presence. In the sixtieth Homily to the people of Antioch he speaks as follows: "Since Jesus Christ, the Divine Word, says: 'This is My body,' let us believe His words and give our assent to them; let us behold His body with the eyes of our mind, for Christ does not show Himself to us in a sensible way, but under sensible things He gives us all that is intelligible (in other words, that we can perceive with our mind only).

He has acted in like manner in baptism, for therein He bestows a gift through a sensible thing, that is, water; by means of the water there is effected something intelligible, the spiritual regeneration and renovation. For, if thou wert incorporeal (that is, hadst not a body), He would have given thee purely incorporeal gifts; but, since in thee thy soul dwells in thy body, He gives thee intelligible things in a sensible (or material) envelope. How many among you now say: 'Oh, if I could only behold His form, His features, His clothing, His shoes!' Behold now thou seest Him, thou touchest Him, thou eatest Him! And thou desirest indeed to see His garments; and He grants thee not only to see Him, but also to eat Him, to touch Him, to receive Him within thee."

In the above quoted passage St. John Chrysostom, after telling us to believe the words of Christ saying that the Blessed Eucharist is really His body, reminds us that God bestows His spiritual gifts, which are invisible and do not fall under our senses, on us men under a visible or material envelope, and thereby adapts Himself to our nature, for our soul which is immaterial and does not fall under the senses, dwells in our material body and is acted upon through our body. In these words of St. John

Chrysostom is contained the doctrine of the Church on the Sacraments. They are visible signs instituted by Christ to impart invisible grace to the soul by their application to the body, in order to sanctify the soul.

"Therefore," continues the holy Doctor, "let no one approach (the Holy Eucharist) with disgust or with indifference, but let all do so inflamed with love, fervor and eagerness. For, if the Jews ate the paschal lamb in haste, already shod and holding staves in their hands, how much more does it behoove thee to be diligent. They, indeed, were about to depart for Palestine, and were, therefore, attired as travelers; but thou must journey to heaven. Wherefore, thou shouldst in all things be watchful, for not a small punishment is inflicted on those who receive unworthily. Consider how indignant thou art against the traitor Judas and those who crucified Jesus. Beware, therefore, lest thou be guilty of the body and blood of Christ. They killed His most holy body, but thou receivest Him in a sinful soul after He has loaded thee with so many benefits. For He did not consider it enough for Him to become man, to be scourged and crucified, but He deigns to unite Himself intimately to us, and to make us His body, not only in faith, but in reality.

How pure, then, should not he be who partakes of so great a sacrifice? And should not the hand which *touches* His flesh (as was the custom in receiving Communion in the early Church), be more pure and splendid than the sun's rays? And the mouth which is filled with the spiritual fire (of Christ's love) and the tongue which is moistened with that most precious blood? Reflect on the great honor conferred on thee, on the magnificent feast thou enjoyest. What the angels behold with awe, and venture not to gaze upon on account of its dazzling brilliancy, is what we feed upon, what we are united to; thus do we become one body, one flesh with Christ. Who will narrate the powers of God and proclaim all His praises? What shepherd feeds his sheep with his own blood? And what do I say, a shepherd? Many mothers, after the pains of childbirth, entrust their children to others to be nursed. But Christ did not suffer this, for He feeds us with His own blood and most intimately unites us to Himself."

He who reads the foregoing passage of St. John Chrysostom would imagine he is reading the incomparable book of Visits of St. Alphonsus, instead of the writings of one who lived fourteen hundred years earlier. What a powerful argument of the

unity of faith in the Catholic Church throughout all ages, especially in the doctrine of the Real Presence! This will be still more evident in reading the remainder of the saint's homily: "Through the mysteries (the Blessed Eucharist), Christ mingles Himself," continues St. John Chrysostom, "with each one of the faithful, and does not entrust to others, but Himself feeds those He has begotten (spiritually); by this He again convinces thee that He has assumed thy flesh (that is, become man). Let us not grow indifferent towards Him, since He has considered us worthy of so great a love and so exalted an honor. Do you not see how eagerly infants take and apply their lips to the breasts of their nurses? Let us also approach this holy table with a like eagerness and take hold of the breasts of our spiritual beverage; let us, even with greater avidity than suckling infants, suck in the spiritual graces, and let our only sorrow be to be deprived of this (divine) food. It is not the works of human virtue that are here placed before us; He who performed them at the Last Supper, now also performs them. We hold the place of His ministers (or servants); and it is He Himself who blesses and changes these (the bread and wine). Therefore, let no Judas be here present, nor any

miser; for this table does not receive such guests. Let him who is truly a disciple be present, for Christ said: 'I celebrate the pasch with My disciples.' This is the same table; it contains nothing less. It is Christ who set up the feast at the Last Supper, and not (a mere) man who has set up this one; no; it is the same Christ who has set up this one also. Let no one who is devoid of humanity, who is cruel and unmerciful, who is impure, venture to approach this feast. This I say to those who receive Holy Communion and also to those who minister at the altar. For I must address you also, that you may most diligently distribute these gifts. For no small punishment awaits you, if you allow any one you know to be guilty of a grievous fault (that is, a known public sinner), to be a partaker of this feast, for Christ's blood will then be demanded at your hands. Whether he who unworthily approaches be a general, or a magistrate, or even a crowned prince, you must refuse him (Holy Communion), for your power is greater than his. It is for this reason that God has bestowed so great an honor on you, that you may discern these holy things! This is your dignity, this is your own security, this is all your crown, and not that you may go about in a white and re-

splendent vestment. And thou, O layman, when thou seest the priest offering (the holy Sacrifice), do not imagine that it is the priest who does this, but that thou seest Christ invisibly extending His hand. Let us, then, both priests and laymen, hear of what food we have been made worthy; let us hear it and be dumbfounded. Jesus gave us His own flesh as our food, and set Himself immolated before us. What excuse shall we bring, after being so generously nourished with such meats, if we sin, if, like wolves, we devour the meek Lamb, or after having, like peaceful sheep, been fed, we become devouring lions? This mystery requires us to be entirely free not only from robbery, but even from the slightest uncharitable feeling, for it is a mystery of peace. God bound the Jews to Himself by instituting solemn feasts in memory and as monuments of His benefits towards them; He has bound Himself to thee every day by these mysteries (the Sacrifice of the Mass). Let no Judas, no Simon (Magus) approach this table; both of them perished through avarice; let us flee this abyss of perdition."

In the above passage, St. Chrysostom, after exhorting his hearers to imitate the eagerness and avidity of suckling infants, whenever they go to Holy Communion, tells them that the priests are the

representatives of Jesus Christ, and only personating Jesus Christ when they say Mass and give Holy Communion to the faithful. He then insists on the necessity of being in the state of grace in order to receive worthily the body and blood of Christ.

In his sixty-first homily to the people of Antioch, the holy Doctor speaks as follows: "It behooves us, most beloved brethren, to learn the miracle of the mysteries, its character, why it was given, and its advantages. By it we are made one body, members, Jesus says, of His flesh and of His bones. Let us, who are initiated (that is, already members of the Church by baptism), follow what is said, that we may become one body, not so much through charity, *but in very deed;* let us mingle together in that flesh (that is, the flesh of Jesus Christ received in Holy Communion). This is done through the food which He gave us, for He wished to show His desire (good will) towards us. Wherefore He mingled Himself with us and intimately penetrated us with His body, that we might become one body, as it were, attached to Him, our Head; for such is the tendency of ardent lovers."

What does St. Chrysostom mean by the foregoing words? He recalls, and, in some manner, explains the saying of St. Paul that we, Christians,

are *one body* with Jesus Christ, He being the Head and we the members of that mystical body. He calls our attention to this, that we all should be, indeed, one body, not merely by observing the commandment of the love of our neighbor, but especially through Holy Communion, in which we receive the flesh of Jesus Christ, are incorporated in His body and become, as it were, one body with Him and with one another; and being by Holy Communion one with Jesus Christ, we should be one with one another, for it is in Him, in the reception of His body, that we are incorporated together in Him. Hence the reception of the body of Jesus Christ is very properly called *Communion,* for by it Jesus Christ becomes for all the faithful the "*common* bond of union," as the head is the common bond of union for all the members of the body.

Let us now consider the conclusions the saint draws from what he has just said: "When we leave the holy table (of Communion), we should be like lions breathing forth fire, terrible to the devil, meditating on our Head (Jesus Christ) and on the love He manifests to us. Mothers often give their infants to be nursed by others; but I, He says to us, do not act thus; I feed you with My own flesh; I give Myself to you as your nourishment, wishing

you all to be generous, and to give you good hopes for the next life, for since I give Myself to you here below, I will do it still more perfectly in the future life. I wished to become your brother, and for your sakes I assumed human flesh and blood; and now again I deliver to you the very flesh and blood, by which I became your relative."

Nothing can be more positive and explicit than these words of the holy Doctor, to show that Jesus Christ in Holy Communion bestows on us His real flesh and His real blood, in order to unite us with Him in this life and still more perfectly in the next. This is another conclusive proof that, according to Christ's very words, he who, in Holy Communion, eats the flesh of the Son of man and drinks His blood, shall have life everlasting.

Let us now see how St. Chrysostom concludes this important subject: "Let us attend to ourselves, most beloved brethren, when we enjoy these wonderful benefits; and when we are tempted to speak unbecomingly, to get irritated or to do anything sinful, let us call to mind the wonderful things of which we have partaken. Such a thought will serve to correct (and restrain) our evil inclinations. Let us all who have the happiness of being made partakers of this body and of tasting this

blood, earnestly reflect that we are tasting Him who is seated above, whom the angels adore, whose might never fails. Oh, how many ways (helps) have we to salvation! Jesus Christ has made us (members of) His body; He has communicated to us His own body."

By these words St. John Chrysostom shows us how to draw fruit from the reception of the body and blood of our Lord in Holy Communion. The very thought, when the temptation comes, that we have received in Holy Communion the very body and blood of our divine Savior, should so strengthen us as to enable us to overcome the temptation and keep in check all our evil propensities and desires, for one of the reasons for which Jesus feeds us with His body and blood is to impart to us all the graces necessary to our salvation. Hence he who receives Holy Communion as often as the Church desires, should be able not only to avoid deadly sins, but also to become holy by faithfully practising the virtues of a true Christian, of a faithful follower of Christ. In Holy Communion we become, as it were, one with Christ, and should, then, so live, as if Jesus Christ acted through us, so that we may henceforth be able to say with St. Paul: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20).

## VIII

### THE REAL PRESENCE PROVED BY THE ARGUMENT OF "PRESCRIPTION"

With the exception of a small number of obscure heretics, no one had denied the Catholic doctrines of the Real Presence until the appearance of Luther and other heretics in the sixteenth century. Not only the whole Catholic Church, but also all the ancient sects which, centuries previous to the pretended Reformation, had been cut off from the Church of Christ, such as the Greeks, the Nestorians, the Copts and the Armenians, had always believed and still believe in the Real Presence. But in the sixteenth century a novel and upstart religion, headed by the apostate monk Luther, without either divine authority, mission, or sanction, came forward repudiating the ancient and universal belief in the Real Presence and other genuine Christian truths, charging them with being anti-Christian and idolatrous, striving in a hundred different and contradictory ways to explain and in-

terpret the express and most plain words of Jesus Christ, constantly wrangling among themselves and splitting into numberless sects. On the other hand, the Catholic Church (and even all the aforesaid ancient sects likewise) has continued to believe and cling faithfully to the original doctrine of the Real Presence as preached to her by the apostles of Jesus Christ, maintaining that she has always been in lawful possession of this sacred doctrine taught by the apostles, who heard it from the very lips of the Savior.

That the Catholic Church received her doctrine of the Real Presence from Jesus Christ and His apostles, can be proved by arguments other than texts of Scripture and quotations from the writings of the Holy Fathers and Doctors of the Church. One of these arguments is called the argument of "Prescription." This form of proof is used both in law and in theology. In law it is equivalent to the old adage: "Possession is nine points of the law." For instance, a man who has long been in undisputed possession of some property or privilege, is deemed its lawful possessor, and cannot be dispossessed, unless legally conclusive proof is given, that he never had a lawful right to the same. The burden of the proof rests on the party

impugning his right thereto; that is, he who is in possession needs not *directly* to prove his right.

Now let us see how in theology "Prescription" is an unanswerable and conclusive proof. That the Catholic Church alone has existed from the time of Jesus Christ and His apostles and was founded by them is admitted by all who are acquainted with history. Hence it was the Catholic Church which Jesus Christ commissioned to teach all nations, and of which all nations were bound to believe and to become members under the pain of eternal condemnation: "Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark 16: 15, 16). It is, therefore, clear that the Catholic Church was founded by Christ, and that all men were obliged to believe her teaching under the pain of forfeiting their salvation. Even Protestants admit that the Catholic Church was the Church of Christ, the true Church, during the first three centuries; "but," say they, "after the first three centuries, the Catholic Church began to corrupt the doctrines of Christ and His apostles, adding a number of doctrines and practices both false and idolatrous, which Jesus and His apostles had not taught, such as Confession,

the Real Presence, prayers to the Virgin and to the saints." Here we have only to refute them by using the argument of "Prescription," saying to them: "You say that the doctrine of the Real Presence was never taught by Jesus Christ and His apostles. If so, it must have been introduced into the Church at a later date; please tell us, then, *when, where* and *by whom* such a wonderful doctrine was introduced, for it must have drawn the attention of the Christians of the time; we know the place, time, and authors of the various novel doctrines, differing from and opposed to the doctrines transmitted to His Church by Jesus Christ and His apostles; we can give the time, place, and authors of the heresies broached in all ages. If the Real Presence is not a doctrine of Christ and His apostles, as you assert so boldly, you must be able to give us the particulars of its first appearance in the Church. But this you cannot do, for there is no record of a later introduction into the Creed of the Catholic Church, as there is for the first appearance of Arianism, Nestorianism, Eutychianism, Donatism, Pelagianism and Protestantism with its various sects. Hence the conclusion is clear that the doctrine of the Real Presence was contained in the doctrines, which Christ and His apostles commis-

sioned the Church to teach to mankind, and to be believed by all men under pain of eternal condemnation."

The history of the Church most clearly proves that no novel doctrine opposed to, or different from, that of Jesus could be broached either in the early ages of the Church or in later times without causing great opposition and horror among the faithful and without being at once condemned. Faith was held dearer than anything else, and worthy of the sacrifice of all goods and life itself for its preservation, as is attested by millions of martyrs who died in its defense. The horror of heresy, of false and novel doctrines, can be seen from numberless examples, a few of which are given here. "If any man come to you and bring this (novel) doctrine, receive him not into the house, nor say to him, God speed you" (2 John 10). It is St. John, the apostle of charity, who says this; and what he said he also practised; for when he was told that the heretic Cerinthus had entered the house he was in, St. John at once left it, for he did not wish to remain under the same roof as a heretic. The heretic Arius was explaining his heresy in an assembly; but the hearers showed their horror by closing their ears and would not listen to the

blasphemies. One day the heretic Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople, whilst preaching to his own diocesans, said that Mary was not the Mother of God, but only the mother of the man called "Christ," the people were so horrified that they all at once left the church. On another occasion a member of his clergy, by his order, was preaching the same heretical doctrine, to the horror of the people, when a certain Eusebius, a prominent layman, could no longer stand such heretical preaching, arose and proceeded to protest and to refute him, to the delight and applause of the people.

The charge that the Church of Jesus Christ fell into errors and corrupted His doctrine, is an insult to our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, for He repeatedly asserted that His Church would never in the least swerve from the truth, and would always triumph over error. In the first place, the angel Gabriel, the messenger of God to the virgin Mary, expressly declared to her that the kingdom of the Son, who was to be born of her, would have no end: "And of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:33). The kingdom of Jesus Christ is His Church, and had His Church fallen into error, it would no longer be His kingdom and the divine prophecy of its lasting forever would

have failed of fulfillment; but what God Himself foretells must be fulfilled, for He is Truth itself, and not a liar or a deceiver, as such a charge would make Him!

In the next place Jesus Christ said to Peter: "Thou art Peter (that is, the rock), and on this rock I will build My Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against her" (Mat. 16:18). History shows how "the gates of hell," that is, errors and earthly power, have fought against her, to subdue her, to enslave her, to crush her, but all in vain. Hence St. Jerome says: "As long as the world shall last, the strength of the Church shall be tested and shall abide the test. This shall be so, because the Lord God almighty, who is the Lord God of the Church, has promised that so it shall be, and His promise is an unchanging law." Had the Church ever fallen into error or into idolatrous practices, as Protestants charge, our divine Savior would have proved a false prophet! To say this is clearly a blasphemy! Moreover, did not our divine Savior also promise to be with His Church until the end of the world, saying: "Behold, *I am with you all days* until the consummation of ages"? (Mat. 28:20). Did He not also make this promise to His Church (apostles) on the eve of

His death, saying: "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Paraclete, that *He may abide* with you forever, The *Spirit of truth*. . . . The Paraclete the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name; *He will teach you all things* and bring all things to your minds, whatsoever I shall have said to you" (John 14:16, 17, 26). Had the Church of Christ, the Catholic Church, which is the only Church He founded, ever fallen into error and idolatrous practices, or taught anything different from the doctrine of Christ, He would not have kept all these promises. To assert this is nothing short of blasphemy. Christ made and destined His Church to be "the pillar and ground of truth" (1 Tim. 3:15), and surely kept His promise.

Moreover, let us remember that God does not change, cannot change, for He is infinitely perfect; only that changes and can change, which is imperfect and is liable to grow better, to improve, or to grow worse, to deteriorate. God does not change and "the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance" (that is, unchangeable) (Rom. 11:29). Therefore, the Catholic Church, once founded and established by Jesus Christ as His Church, as assisted by Him, as taught and directed by the Holy

Ghost, the Spirit of truth, is always to remain so, and is therefore and shall ever be the true and infallible Church of Christ, and her teaching and doctrines shall ever be the teaching and doctrines of Jesus Christ, in which there neither is nor can be any error. To assert the contrary is to charge God with error! No other church can have the least claim to being the Church of Jesus Christ. Listen to the words of St. Paul: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema. As we said before, so now I say again: If any one preach to you a gospel, besides that which you have received, let him be anathema. . . . For I give you to understand, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For neither did I receive it of man, nor did I learn it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:8, 9, 11, 12). Here St. Paul anathematizes all those who preach a gospel different from that which he had preached to them and which Jesus Christ Himself had specially revealed to him. And his anathema would extend to himself and even to an angel, were he or the angel to preach a gospel differing from that which he had preached to them. This is a terrible condemnation of those pretended

reformers of the sixteenth and other centuries who dared to preach a gospel, that is, doctrines differing from that preached by St. Paul and the other apostles on the Real Presence and other doctrines which the Catholic Church received from Jesus Christ Himself!

The same apostle, St. Paul, writes thus to the Romans: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord (says the prophet Joel 2:32), shall be saved. How, then, shall they call on Him, in whom they have not believed? Or how shall they believe Him, of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they be sent? . . . Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word (the Gospel) of Christ" (Rom. 10:14, 15, 17). No one may therefore undertake to preach the Gospel, to teach the doctrines of Christ, unless he is sent by Christ, unless he has his mission to do so from Jesus Christ Himself. The Catholic Church alone has her mission to do so from Jesus Christ and His apostles, and therefore, the Catholic Priesthood, the mouthpiece of the Church, is alone entrusted with that mission. Whence, then, had the Protestant reformers of the sixteenth century the mission to preach a gospel different from that preached by the Cath-

olic Church, which Christ commissioned to preach to mankind? They could not have it from Christ who is ever with His Church, as He solemnly promised, and whose teaching is as unchangeable as truth itself. If not from Christ, it must be from "the gates of hell," vainly attempting to prevail against the Church Christ founded on Peter!

Therefore, let us firmly believe in the Real Presence and in the other mysteries the Catholic Church teaches, and let us thank God for the inestimable gift of faith, and especially for His personal, though invisible, Presence among us in the Blessed Eucharist. There in our churches we can visit Him, pay Him our homages, thank Him, beseech Him to forgive our sins and to assist us in our wants, temptations, and trials, with the confidence of being heard. Protestants cannot find Jesus Christ in their churches, for they have no Real Presence; and they have no Real Presence because they have no Priesthood, no one empowered to do what Jesus did at the Last Supper, to change bread and wine into His Very Body and His Very Blood. Some of the pious among the Separated Brethren, when they wish to pay their homage to Jesus Christ and beseech His assistance, are accustomed to come to a Catholic Church to find Jesus and pour our their hearts to

Him! May He deign to bestow on them the gift of the true faith!

Finally, we have had, of late years, tangible proofs of the Real Presence in the Catholic Church. Lourdes, a small town in France, not far from the Pyrenees, is a renowned place of pilgrimage in honor of the Blessed Virgin, who in 1858 several times appeared to a little peasant girl, and gave her her name, saying: "I am the Immaculate Conception"; and told her that she wished that people should henceforth come there in crowds to honor her and receive favors. Every year people afflicted with various incurable diseases beyond all medical (or magical) skill, or with spiritual and other trials, come from almost every country in the world to implore help, health, etc., through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin. Every year miraculous cures, proved beyond all shadow of doubt, more or less numerous, take place, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin; but the majority of them at the general pilgrimages are directly performed by Jesus Christ Himself in the Holy Eucharist, thus proving the Real Presence of Jesus Christ therein. A few days before the breaking out of the terrible war now going on in Europe, that is, on the 25th of July, 1914, the International Eucharistic Con-

gress was in session at Lourdes, listening to the great Dominican preacher, Rev. Father Janvier. The following lines are taken from his sermon:

"For us," says Father Janvier, "the miracles, which take place at Lourdes, have an important bearing. They confirm and facilitate our faith in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. . . . The miracles which have taken place before the tabernacle, after a Holy Communion, during the passing by and at the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, confirm our faith in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. This faith, in fact, is for the sick, the inspiration of their supplications. They believe that Jesus Christ is truly, really, and substantially present in the Host; that He is hidden therein with His Body and with His Blood, with His Mind and His Heart, with His Humanity and with His Divinity. This is the reason why they go to Him as if they touched Him with their hands; as if they heard Him with their ears; as if they actually beheld Him in His physical body. From Him they expect consolation, their cure, health, and life, and their expectation is based on the words pronounced by the Prophet of Nazareth over the first consecrated bread and wine: 'This is My body! This is My blood'; in a word, it is based on His

positive Presence in the ciborium, in the chalice, in the monstrance. And God, by choosing His intervention, for performing a miracle, the very moment when he receives Holy Communion, the very moment when the Blessed Sacrament passes near him and blesses him, God Himself, I say, by these very facts, adheres by a sensible sign, to the words of Jesus (instituting the Eucharist); He adheres indirectly, it is true, but, at the same time, He implicitly and truly approves them and holds Himself responsible for the teaching of the Church proclaiming the Real Presence of Jesus Christ, true God and true man, in our tabernacles. Is God mistaken in this? No, my brethren, for He possesses in a transcending degree the science of facts, of things and their essences. No, my brethren, for He is infallible, not only in His thoughts, but He is infallible also when He speaks; He could not betray the truth without ceasing to be God. Therefore the miracles of Lourdes bring fresh security to our faith. By their means God guarantees that our faith in the Majesty of the Altar has a solid basis, that the Savior really dwells in the Sacred Host, and that we can safely offer to the Host the adorations, the prayers which the Israelites addressed to Jesus, the Son of the heavenly Father."

## IX

### THE REAL PRESENCE AND THE ANGELIC DOCTOR

Who is the Angelic Doctor? St. Thomas Aquinas. He is surnamed the Angelic Doctor, or the Angel of the Schools, because in clearness and depth of learning he is more like an angel than a man. Without exaggeration it may be said that his was the grandest mind ever possessed by mortal man. All our modern intellectual giants are veriest pigmies when compared to St. Thomas Aquinas. In his works are found, as Pope Leo XIII insinuates, besides the clearest proofs and the vindication of the Christian truths, the most thorough refutation of all errors past, present and future. Although so wonderfully learned, he writes in a style so simple, so plain and clear, that there can be no mistaking of his meaning. But many complain of finding it hard to understand him. That is true; but the difficulty of understanding St. Thomas lies not in the intricacy or obscurity of his sentences, or in the ambiguity of his terms, for his sentences are very

simple and his terms are well defined; the difficulty of understanding him results from the depth and sublimity of the subjects he treats, both in philosophy and theology. St. Thomas was also a very holy man and very much addicted to prayer. Whenever in writing on a subject, he came across a difficult point, he had recourse to mental prayer to obtain from God the light he needed, and would continue therein till the difficult point became clear in his mind, so that he was wont to say that he learned more by prayer than by study. Luther dreaded the works and arguments of St. Thomas more than anything else, for he uttered the vain boast that, if the Catholics would give up St. Thomas, he would destroy the Catholic Church! At the great Council of Trent the two great works that were the oftenest consulted and that were placed side by side, were the Holy Bible and the great Summa of St. Thomas.

St. Thomas Aquinas was born about the year 1226 in Southern Italy. At the age of nineteen years he received the Dominican habit at Naples, where he was prosecuting his studies. This greatly displeased all members of his family who, finding their entreaties useless, resolved to remove him from the convent by force. To prevent this, the Dominicans secretly sent him to Paris. But he

was waylaid and captured by his brothers, and imprisoned in a castle. There every means, both fair and foul, was used to prevail on him to give up his vocation, but all in vain, for he not only remained steadfast, but even succeeded in prevailing upon his sisters, who had been sent to overcome his constancy, to leave the world and enter the religious state. With their help he escaped from his prison and succeeded in reaching Paris; and soon was sent first to Cologne to study under the renowned Blessed Albert the Great, and later on to Paris where he received the degree of Doctor with St. Bonaventure, and for a number of years taught with wonderful success theology and philosophy in its celebrated University. "The Church," says Father Bowden, "has ever venerated his numerous writings as a treasure-house of sacred doctrine; while in naming him the Angelic Doctor, she has indicated that his science is more divine than human. The rarest gifts of intellect were combined in him with the tenderest piety." He died in 1274 on his way to the General Council of Lyons, to which Pope Gregory X had summoned him. St. Thomas is intimately connected with the history of the Blessed Eucharist in the Catholic Church. In the year 1264 Pope Urban IV ordered the celebration of the Feast of

*Corpus Christi,* which he had just instituted, throughout the whole Church. He enjoined a committee of theologians, among whom were St. Thomas and the great St. Bonaventure, surnamed the Seraphic Doctor, on account of the ardent piety and sublimity of his writings, to prepare each the Office and the Mass of the Blessed Sacrament for that great Feast. When St. Thomas had read what he had written on the subject St. Bonaventure would not read what he himself had prepared, because, as he said, it would bear no comparison with what St. Thomas had composed. Let us now examine some of the beautiful passages of the wonderful composition of St. Thomas on the Blessed Eucharist. The following is a passage from the Divine Office:

"The immense benefits of the divine bounty bestowed on Christians confer on them an inestimable dignity. For there is not, nor was there ever in former times, a nation that had its gods so near as our God is near to us. The only-begotten Son of God, wishing to render us partakers of His divinity, assumed our nature, in order that, after becoming man, He might make man divine. Moreover, the nature He assumed like ours, the very same He delivered up for our salvation; for He offered on the altar of the cross His body as victim for our recon-

ciliation with His Father; He shed His blood both for our ransom and as a cleansing bath, so that we, being redeemed from a wretched slavery, might be cleansed from all sins. Now, in order that the remembrance of so great a benefit should remain constantly in us, He left His body and His blood, under the appearances of bread and wine, to be used by the faithful as (spiritual) food and drink. O feast so precious, so much to be admired, bringing salvation and filled with every sweetness! For what can be more precious than this feast, in which, not the flesh of bullocks and goats as in the Old Law, are placed before the guests, but in which Christ, the true God, is given to us as our food? What is more wonderful than this Sacrament? For in it the bread and wine are substantially changed into the body and blood of Christ; and therefore Christ, the true God and perfect man, is contained under the appearances of a little bread and wine. He is eaten by the faithful, but not torn in pieces; for, if the Sacrament is divided, Christ (is not divided, but) remains whole under each particle. The accidents subsist without subject in this Sacrament, so as to make room for our faith, whilst we are receiving visibly that which is invisibly hidden under a foreign species."

In the above quotation we see that St. Thomas expressly declares that in Holy Communion, Christ, the true God, is given us as our food and is eaten by us; however He is not torn in pieces as bodily food. When the Sacred Host is divided, the body of Christ is not divided, but is entire in each piece, however small it may be. In the Blessed Eucharist, he tells us the accidents, that is the taste, color, smell and other properties of bread and wine are present, but the substance of bread and the substance of wine are not present, for they have been changed by consecration into the substance of the body and the substance of the blood of Jesus Christ. The receiving of Holy Communion is visible, but the body and the blood of Christ which we therein really receive, are invisible to our senses, and thus give us the opportunity of exercising our faith.

"No other Sacrament," continues St. Thomas, "is more wholesome than this one, for it purifies our sins, increases our virtues and replenishes our mind with an abundance of good gifts. It is offered in the Church for the living and the dead, so that what was instituted for the salvation of all, might prove useful to all. In fine, no one can sufficiently express the sweetness of this Sacrament, by which spiritual sweetness is tasted in its very fountain,

and in which the remembrance is recalled of the most excellent charity which Christ showed in His Passion. Wherefore, in order to impress the more deeply in the hearts of the faithful the immensity of His love, Christ, after celebrating the Jewish Passover with His disciples at the Last Supper, and being about to go from the world to His Father, instituted this Sacrament, as a perpetual memorial of His Passion, the fulfillment of the ancient figures and the greatest miracles wrought by Him; and He thereby left a wonderful consolation to those who grieved at His departure from this world."

In another place, speaking of the institution of the feast of *Corpus Christi,* he says: " It is befitting the devotion of the faithful, that they should solemnly celebrate the institution of so salutary and so wonderful a Sacrament, and that we should revere the ineffable manner in which our God is present in this visible Sacrament, and praise the power of God working so many wonders in this very Sacrament, and give due thanks to Him for so salutary and sweet a benefit. Although on Holy Thursday, the day on which this Sacrament was instituted, special mention of its institution is made during the solemn Mass, nevertheless, all the remainder of the Office of that day is devoted to the veneration of

the Passion of Jesus Christ. Wherefore, in order that the Christian people should worthily celebrate the institution of so great a Sacrament, Pope Urban IV, filled with devotion towards this Sacrament, piously decreed, that the memory of its institution should be celebrated by all the faithful on the first Thursday following the octave of Pentecost, so that whilst making use of the Sacrament all the year round for our salvation, we may celebrate its institution, especially at the time when the Holy Ghost taught the hearts of the disciples to know fully the mysteries of this Sacrament. It was also at that time that the faithful began to partake of this Sacrament as their spiritual food."

Let us now turn our attention to the beautiful hymns of the Divine Office of the Blessed Sacrament composed by the Angelic Doctor, beginning with the *Pange, lingua, gloriosi,* the hymn for vespers. "Sing, O my tongue, the mystery of the glorious body and precious blood which the King of the nations, who was brought forth from the Virgin's fruitful womb, shed for the world's ransom. To us He was given, for us He was born of the spotless Virgin, and conversed with men, sowing the seed of the word (of God), till He closed in a wonderful manner the time He spent on earth. Whilst at table

with His brethren at the Last Supper, after complying fully with the prescriptions of the (Mosaic) law in eating of the paschal lamb, He with His own hands gave Himself as food to His twelve apostles. The Word made flesh with a word makes real bread His real flesh, and real wine His real blood; and although our senses fail to recognize this change, faith alone suffices to confirm (convince) a sincere heart. (The last two stanzas are the *Tantum ergo* and the *Genitori,* which are sung before every benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.) "Therefore let us this so great Sacrament profoundly revere, and let the ancient figures give way to the new rite, and our faith supply the deficiency of our senses, To the Father and to the Son let there be praise, rejoicing, greeting, honor, virtue and blessing, and equal praising to the Holy Ghost from both proceeding. Amen."

The next hymn we give here of St. Thomas is the *"Sacris solemniis"* for the "Matins" of the Office of the Blessed Sacrament. "Let us celebrate this holy and solemn Feast with joy, and let us sound its praises from our inmost hearts. Let us lay aside the things of old, and let all things be new, our hearts, our voices, our deeds. We now recall the

Supper of that last night when Christ, as we believe, gave the lamb and the unleavened bread to His brethren, in accordance with the laws prescribed to their ancestors. After they had eaten the lamb, a figure of Christ, and finished the repast, Christ, as we should confess, gave to His disciples with His own hands His own body, whole and entire to all, whole and entire to each one likewise. To them in their weakness He gave His body as a strengthening food, and in their sadness He gave them the chalice of His blood, saying: Receive the cup I give you, drink ye all of this. Thus did the Lord institute that Sacrifice which He wished to entrust to His priests alone, for whom it is meet and fit that they should partake of it themselves and also give it to others. Thus the Angels' bread becomes the bread of men. This heavenly bread puts an end to the figures of the Old Law. O wonder of wonders, indeed, for a poor, humble servant feeds on the Lord Himself! O triune Deity, we beseech Thee, deign to visit us, as we worship Thee; through Thy paths lead us to the light to which we tend, and in which Thou dwellest. Amen."

The next hymn of St. Thomas in the Divine Office is that for *Lauds* beginning with the words "*Ver-*

*bum supernum.*" The fourth stanza is worthy of admiration. The great Latin poet, Santeuil, of the seventeenth century, was wont to say, that he would be willing to give up all his fame his Latin poetry had acquired for him, could he thereby possess that of being the author of those four verses, beginning "*Se nascens.*" The fifth stanza and the sixth are those usually sung at Benediction when the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, "*O salutaris*" and "*Uni trinoque.*" Here is the hymn: "The Word of God went forth from heaven without leaving the right hand of His Father; He came on earth to do His work, and reached at length the evening of His life. As He was about to be betrayed to His enemies by one of His disciples, He previously gave Himself to His disciples as the Bread of life. To them under a two-fold species He gave His flesh and blood, so that He might feed the whole of man (who is composed of flesh and blood) — (Se nascens). At His birth He gave Himself to man as a fellow-man; when at table, He made Himself man's food; when dying, He became man's ransom; and reigning in heaven, He gives Himself to man as his reward. (O salutaris) O saving Victim, which openest heaven's gate, whilst enemies wage against us a relentless war, deign to give us strength,

to bring us help. (Uni trinoque) To the triune Lord be everlasting glory, that He may bestow on us in our country a life without end. Amen."

## X

### ST. THOMAS AQUINAS ON THE REAL PRESENCE

The Angelic Doctor so clearly and so beautifully elucidates the doctrine of the Real Presence, that it will not be thought inopportune or wearisome, to devote another article to quotations from his works on this vital subject, especially since our holy Mother the Church has made so prominent a use of them. After the Epistle of the Mass of *Corpus Christi*, the priest before proceeding to read or sing the Gospel, reads the following "Sequence," or hymn of St. Thomas, in honor of the Blessed Eucharist:

"Praise, O Sion, thy Savior; sing hymns and canticles in praise of thy Guide and Shepherd. Praise Him with all thy might, for He is above all praise and can never be sufficiently praised. As a special theme of praise, there is this day proposed the living and life-giving Bread, which at that blessed supper Christ, it cannot be denied, gave to His twelve apostles. Let our praise be full and melodious, let the rejoicing of our mind abound in

joyful and becoming strains, for this is the day when we solemnly celebrate the first institution of this Sacred Table. In this feast of the New King the New Pasch of the New Law puts an end to the passover of the Old Law. This new Feast puts the ancient to flight. Truth expels the shadow and daylight displaces the darkness of night. That which Christ performed at His Last Supper, He declared should ever be done in remembrance of Him. Taught by His holy precepts, we consecrate bread and wine into the Victim of salvation. The Christians are taught that bread is changed into the flesh of Christ, and wine into His blood. That which thou graspest not and seest not, since it is outside the order of nature, thou shouldst believe with a lively faith. Under diverse species (of bread and wine), which are mere signs and not substances, there are hidden far more excellent things. The flesh of Christ is food and His blood is drink; and yet Christ is whole and entire under each species. He is not cut by those who receive Him, nor is He broken or divided (by the division of the species), but He is always received whole and entire. One person receives Him; a thousand also receive Him; yet all and each one receive one and the same (neither more nor less); and when He is

received, He is not consumed. The good receive Him; the wicked also receive Him, but with the different result, either of life or of perdition. He is death to the wicked, and life to the good; thus thou seest how different is the outcome of each, although both receive the very same food. When the Sacred Host is broken, do not waver, but remember that Christ is contained in the smallest part, as well as in the whole. There is no breaking of the substance (of Christ's body), but only the breaking of the sign (species), by which neither the state nor the size of the 'signified' (the body of Christ) is diminished. Behold (then) the Bread of Angels, become the food of wayfarers (on the road to heaven, our true country, our true home); it is the real Bread of the children (of God), which should not be given to the dogs (to the unworthy, to those laden with mortal sin). It was prefigured in the immolation of Isaac, in the paschal lamb, and in the manna given to the Israelites. O Jesus, our Good Shepherd, truly (our) bread, have mercy on us; deign to feed us, deign to protect us, deign to make us see the good things in the land of the living (heaven). Thou who art omniscient and almighty, who here below feedest us mortals, deign to admit us into heaven, as coheirs and

companions of its holy citizens, to share (there forever) in Thy Sacred Banquet. Amen."

Such is the grand hymn of St. Thomas explaining most clearly the doctrine of the Real Presence, which the priest reads in the Mass of the Feast of *Corpus Christi,* and which is called by its first words: *Lauda, Sion.* In Catholic countries, either on the Feast itself or on the Sunday following, there is a solemn triumphal procession with the Blessed Sacrament in the open air, during which the *Lauda Sion,* and other hymns in honor of our Eucharistic Savior are sung.

St. Thomas Aquinas also composed the antiphons for the *Magnificat* of first and second Vespers of the office of *Corpus Christi.* They are as follows: 1. "O Lord, how sweet is Thy Spirit, since in order to manifest Thy sweetness towards Thy children, Thou by bestowing the most sweet Bread from heaven, fillest the hungry with good things, and sendest away hungry the fastidious rich." 2. "O sacred Banquet in which Christ is received, the remembrance of His passion is recalled, the mind is filled with grace, and the pledge of future glory is given to us."

These antiphons remind us of the words of our divine Savior in His discourse promising the insti-

tution of the Blessed Eucharist. There is another hymn of St. Thomas in honor of the Blessed Eucharist, which, although not placed either in the Office or in the Mass of *Corpus Christi,* is found among the prayers recommended to be said by priests during their thanksgiving after saying Mass, and is well adapted to be recited during a visit to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, or sung when the Blessed Sacrament is exposed for the adoration and benediction of the faithful, and therefore we give it here.

"Devoutly I adore Thee, O hidden God, who truly remainest concealed under these species. My heart wholly subjects itself to Thee, because whilst contemplating Thee, it grows faint (with love). The sight, the touch, the taste are deceived in Thee; here we can trust our hearing only; wherefore whatever the Son of God has said, I firmly believe for there is nothing more true than this word of Truth itself. On the Cross Christ's Divinity alone was concealed; but here even His humanity is hidden; nevertheless, believing and acknowledging both, I pray for that which the penitent thief prayed for. Thy wounds, O Jesus, I do not, like Thomas, behold; nevertheless I own Thee for my God. Grant that I may evermore and more believe in Thee, hope

in Thee and love Thee. O Memorial of the Lord's death, living Bread imparting life to man; grant that my mind may always live by Thee, and that it may always relish Thy sweetness. O loving Pelican, Lord Jesus, cleanse my impurities with Thy blood, a single drop of which is sufficient to save the whole world from its sins. O Jesus, whom I now behold veiled (in this Sacrament), grant, I beseech Thee, that which I thirst for, that when I shall see Thy Face revealed, I may be made happy by the vision of Thy Glory. Amen."

In this hymn and in his prayers destined for priests before and after Mass St. Thomas shows that he is not a dry, learned philosopher and theologian, but that his piety is as tender as his learning is great. This will be apparent to our readers from two of his prayers recommended especially to priests by the Church, the one before, and the other after Mass, which all of us may well use before and after holy Communion.

1. Before Communion. "O almighty and eternal God, behold me approaching the Sacrament of Thy only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ; I come to It as a sick man goes to the Physician of life, the unclean to the Fountain of mercy, the blind to the Light of eternal splendor, the poor and needy

to the Lord of heaven and earth. Wherefore I beseech the abundance of Thy immense bounty to deign to heal my infirmity, to wash my uncleanness, to enlighten my blindness, to enrich my poverty, to clothe my nakedness, so that I may receive the Bread of Angels, the King of kings; the Lord of lords, with such reverence and humility, with such contrition and devotion, with such purity and faith, with such good purpose and intention as is conducive to the salvation of my soul. Grant me, I beseech Thee, to receive not only the Sacrament of the Lord's body and blood, but also the reality and virtue of this Sacrament. O God of meekness, grant that I may so receive the body of Thy only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, which He took from the Virgin Mary, that I may deserve to be incorporated into His mystical body and numbered among His members. O most loving Father, grant that I may forever contemplate face to face Thy beloved Son, whom I propose to receive concealed in this Sacrament. Amen."

The foregoing prayer of St. Thomas before holy Communion is addressed to the heavenly Father to obtain from Him the graces we need to receive His divine Son worthily and profitably for our salvation.

In like manner, the Saint addresses his thanksgiving after holy Communion to the eternal Father also, for giving him the body and blood of His only-begotten Son as the food of his soul, and beseeches Him to grant that he may derive therefrom the fruits of eternal life:

2. After Communion. "I give Thee thanks, O holy Lord, almighty Father, eternal God, who, without any merit on my part, but solely through Thy merciful condescension, didst deign to satiate me, a sinner and Thy unworthy servant, with the precious body and blood of Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. I beseech Thee to grant that this holy Communion be not to me a source of punishable guilt, but a wholesome intercession for pardon; may it be to me the expulsion of my evil habits, the extermination of my concupiscence and lust, an increase of charity and patience, of humility and obedience, and of all the virtues; a firm defense against the snares of all my enemies, both visible and invisible; the perfect appeasement of all my emotions, both carnal and spiritual; may it be to me a firm clinging to Thee, the one and true God, and the happy consummation of my end. And I beseech Thee to deign to lead me, a sinner, to that ineffable Banquet,

where Thou with Thy Son and the Holy Ghost, art to Thy Saints the true light, the complete fulness, everlasting joy, consummate pleasure and perfect happiness. Amen."

## XI

### THE REAL PRESENCE, A MYSTERY

Many sincere Non-Catholics refuse to believe in the Real Presence, on the ground that it is wholly incomprehensible to them, how a little piece of bread can become the true body of Jesus Christ, and a few drops of wine can become His true blood, and how His body and blood can be in so many places at the same time and be actually received whole and entire by so many persons. They claim that, if they could understand this, they would no longer refuse to believe in the Real Presence.

We should, however, bear in mind that the truth of a thing does not depend on our understanding it. Experience shows that every one of us holds many things to be true which he does not and cannot understand. Every one knows and believes, that the food he partakes of is changed into his own blood and flesh; that the blood circulating in his body becomes flesh, veins and arteries, bones, skin, hair, and forms the different organs of his body; but does he *understand* all this? *how* this is done is a perfect

mystery to him. The same may be asserted of the vegetable kingdom: plant, for instance, a peach stone; in the course of time it will grow into a tree; now tell me how the very same sap of the peach tree formed in its roots and circulating in the tree forms its bark, its wood, its branches, its leaves, its blossoms, and its fruit which is composed of the stone, the seed, the pulp, the skin, each of which would naturally argue a different origin for every other part. But although we know that the same sap forms them all, can we understand *how* this is effected? Hence even in the natural order there are everywhere mysteries which surpass our understanding, and the only rational explanation we can give thereof is, that God made things so. Our senses, our reason testify to the existence, reality and truth of these natural facts and we act reasonably, when we believe them, although we cannot understand them. Their truth does not depend on our understanding them. Let us never lose sight of the fact that God is almighty, and is also Truth itself; that He gives existence to things by His mere word, by a mere act of His will. Hence to change a bit of bread into His own body, He has only to will it, to declare it, saying: "This is My body." Just as there are mysteries in nature, such as the intimate

union of our soul and body, our physical life, the changes of substances into one another, the workings of electricity, so also, and even much more, there are greater and deeper mysteries in religion, in all that relates directly to God Almighty and infinitely perfect, and in the truths He has deigned to reveal to us through His divine Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, such as the Blessed Trinity, that is, one God in three equal and distinct divine Persons, the Incarnation of the Son of God, and other mysteries, especially that of the Blessed Eucharist or Real Presence.

Wherefore in matters pertaining to faith and revelation, the question is not and should not be, whether we *understand* the doctrines proposed to our belief, but whether these doctrines have been *really revealed* and *taught by Jesus Christ.* Our divine Savior, whilst calling Himself the "Son of man," because He was really man like ourselves, claimed to be the Son of God, to be true God and equal with God, His Father, and to be one with Him; this claim He upheld and proved to be true by numerous unquestionable miracles; the greatest of which and the most unquestionable and the most clearly proved of historical facts, was the raising of Himself to life the third day after His most cruel and public death.

Jesus Christ, therefore, is true God, almighty, omniscient, and the infallible Truth itself. Wherefore, all that Jesus Christ said, declared, and taught, must be accepted as absolutely and infallibly true, however incomprehensible it may be to us. To gainsay the words, the teaching of Jesus Christ is to charge God Himself with deception, ignorance, or impotence. Every man claiming to be a Christian, is bound to admit this without any qualification whatever. The writer of these lines has clearly and conclusively proved that at the "Last Supper" our divine Savior actually changed bread and wine into His very body and very blood, and, at the same time, empowered the priests of His Church to do likewise in remembrance of Him; and, moreover, that Jesus Christ actually declared that "the eating of His flesh and the drinking of His blood is necessary to salvation."

However incomprehensible all this is to our reason, we have no valid reason to doubt it or to hesitate in believing it firmly, for he who denies or doubts it, is not a true Christian, and practically charges Christ with deception, or with lacking the power to do what He wills and expressly declares; he practically joins the ranks of infidels, of unbelievers. A man cannot be or consistently call himself a

Christian, a believer in, a follower of Christ, unless he sincerely believes the words of Christ, who alone "has the words of eternal life" (John 6:69). We know that at the "Last Supper" Jesus Christ said: "This is My body, which shall be delivered for you" (1 Cor. 11:24). What He then held in His hands must have been His true body, though this was not apparently so; to doubt or deny it would be to charge Jesus Christ either with uttering an unmitigated falsehood, or with being unable to change bread into His true body, or with not knowing what He was actually holding in His hands. The true Christian who believes Jesus Christ to be God, to be truth itself, to be omniscient and almighty, will say; "I firmly believe that after Jesus Christ had pronounced these aforesaid words over the bread He had taken into His hands: 'This is My body, which shall be delivered to you,' He actually held in His hands, no longer bread, but His own body, which He sacrificed on the following day on the cross for the salvation of mankind. How the bread could become the true body of Christ, I do not know, I do not understand, but I know that Christ, being God, is almighty and can therefore effect all that He wills, and consequently, that He then by His almighty power, changed the bread He was holding into His

true and real body. I know and believe that Jesus Christ willed, that all who desire salvation should partake of His very flesh and blood, and that He therefore instituted the priesthood in His Church, so that they should multiply His presence in the Blessed Eucharist all over the earth, to enable all men to partake of His flesh and blood; I know also and believe that Jesus Christ, being God and almighty, can do this and has actually done all this; although it is beyond my comprehension and that of all mankind, nevertheless, I believe it all most firmly, for Jesus Christ is the all-wise and all powerful God."

Wherefore in matters of faith it belongs not to us to examine, whether the doctrines we are required to believe are comprehensible to us, but merely to inquire whether they have been revealed by Jesus Christ, our divine Savior; if they are included among the doctrines He has revealed, they are necessarily true, however incomprehensible and mysterious they may appear to our weak and limited reason. In believing them we cannot err, for Jesus Christ, being God, can neither deceive us, nor be Himself deceived or mistaken, and we can then be more certain of their truth and of all the other truths of faith than of any truth pertaining to our natural reason,

and why? Because in believing the truths or doctrines of faith, we rely on the infallible testimony of the all-knowing and infinitely perfect God, and there can be nothing more certain, more sure, than the testimony of God Himself, who can neither deceive nor be deceived: "The testimony of God is greater" (1 John 5:9).

The intellect of the brightest and most intelligent of men is very limited indeed. St. Thomas Aquinas, speaking of the human intellect in relation to the revealed mysteries of our holy religion, compares it to the eyes of the owl in relation to the light of the sun, which is too bright for them to behold. Our modern unbelievers, who reject the truths of divine revelation, merely because they are above their comprehension, are like the owl that would deny the existence of the light of the sun, merely because it is too bright for its vision! But as the owl's denial of the sun-light does not and cannot prove that there is no such thing as the sun-light, so also the unbelievers' denial of the existence and truth of divine revelation has not the least weight against its existence and truth, for they are no more competent to judge in this matter than the owl is to judge of the light of the sun. Unbelievers are the most conceited of men. They pride themselves on their

superior intelligence as self-sufficient and subject to no one, independent of all authority, even of God Himself; their mind becomes the slave of their passions and falls into the most absurd theories and gross errors, and they have the arrogance and effrontery of claiming to be the benefactors of mankind, on the plea of freeing them from all subjection to God and His holy law. But the real truth is that they have led mankind astray from virtue and correct living, and undermined, by their false teachings, the very basis of society itself, the human family. Not one of the proud and boasting unbelievers has ever done as much good to mankind as one Sister of Charity, of Mercy, or one Little Sister of the Poor by her virtuous life and her devoted charity towards her fellow-men! Those vain boasters, claiming infallibility for themselves and their erroneous theories, attempt to destroy in men all belief in God and the supernatural, and practically seek to debase their fellow-men to the level of the brute!

On the other hand, the Protestant sects, hardly less boastful, less arrogant, put their own private judgment, or views, in the place of the Church, which Jesus Christ instituted as His infallible organ, as the competent teacher of His revelation, as the

guide and promoter of salvation. Instead of seeking to know what Jesus Christ really did teach, what His words really mean, and adapting their belief thereto, they exert themselves so to explain His words and doctrines as to suit them to their own views or theories. Our divine Savior, when commanding His apostles to go into the whole world and teach all men the *very things He Himself had taught them,* and threatening eternal punishment to all who would refuse to accept and embrace such teachings, such doctrines, established His Church, the Catholic Church, and not Protestantism or any one of the Protestant sects, as the lawful teacher and competent interpreter of His revelation. Wherefore, the true meaning of His words, of His doctrines, must be sought and will be found, not in the views or teaching of Protestantism or any of its sects, but solely in the teaching and doctrines of the Catholic Church from the time of Christ until the present day. In previous articles we have seen the invincible arguments and unquestionable testimonies, which clearly prove that our divine Savior instituted at the " Last Supper " the Holy Eucharist, by changing bread into His true body, and wine into His true blood. He who denies this, might as well reject Christ and the whole Christian religion, as

so many Protestants now practically do, for without the Real Presence, without the Eucharist, man's redemption would, in some manner, be incomplete! For by His Incarnation Jesus, the Son of God, united Himself to *our human nature;* by His sufferings and death He effected *man's redemption;* but by means of the Holy Eucharist Jesus Christ intimately *unites Himself,* not merely to human nature in general, but to *individual men,* and makes *each individual man* who receives the Holy Eucharist, or Holy Communion, *a partaker* of the fruits of His Passion and death, of the Redemption, and imparts to him the right to heaven and its glory, and thereby completes the individual Redemption of each communicant, who believes in Him and worthily receives Him.

## XII

### THE EXCELLENCE OF THE EUCHARIST

"He hath made a remembrance of His wonderful works, being a gracious and merciful Lord; He hath given food to them that fear Him" (Ps. 110:4, 5).

The Blessed Eucharist is a summary of all the wonders wrought by God. It surpasses all the works of the creation, for in the Eucharist Jesus Christ is really present, both as God and man under the appearances of bread and wine. It surpasses even the work of the Redemption, for it is not only a Sacrifice equal to the Sacrifice of the Cross, since it is its repetition, continuation, perpetuation and application, but it is also the food of our soul, and Jesus becomes therein our Spiritual Physician, our Lord, our most loving Friend and the Spouse of our soul. In a word, the Eucharist is the remembrance of all that God has done for us.

Nothing can be more excellent than the Blessed Eucharist. The excellence of a gift depends, first, on the dignity of the giver. How greatly we should

appreciate even the slightest gift from a divine Giver! Secondly, it depends on the greatness of the gift itself. The Eucharist is, in itself, so great a gift, that none greater, none even so great can be found, for the Eucharist is Jesus Christ Himself, both as God and man; it is so great a gift, that the Almighty Himself, cannot bestow a greater gift than Himself. In the third place, the excellence of a gift depends on the affection that prompts its bestowal. Our divine Savior Himself says: "Greater love than this no man hath, than to lay down His life for His friends" (John 15:3). But Jesus has not merely shown this *greatest* love for us, who were then His enemies by our sins, for He died the most ignominious and cruel of deaths to save us, but He loved us so tenderly as to die on the cross, in order that He might be able, by giving us His very flesh and blood as the food of our souls, to unite Himself most intimately to us, for there is no union more close and inseparable than that of our food with our body. Lastly, the excellence of a gift depends on its wonderful effects. The intimate union of our soul with Jesus Christ in Holy Communion renders us, as St. Peter declares, "partakers of the divine nature" (1 Pet. 1:4). When we receive Holy Communion, Jesus Christ, by uniting Himself

to us, or rather, by uniting us with Himself, enlightens us in the mysteries of our holy faith as He, on the very day of His resurrection, enlightened the two disciples on their way to Emmaus. Holy Communion fills our heart with heavenly joys, purifies us of the sins of human weakness and frailty; it arms and strengthens us to combat manfully our passions and all our spiritual foes, and it especially renders us generous in the service of God, and, as is more than sufficiently proved by the examples of the early Christians, of millions of martyrs and numberless saints, it wonderfully strengthens us in the practice of virtue and will infallibly secure for us eternal life.

### THE EUCHARIST AS A SACRIFICE

"From the rising of the sun to the going down My name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name a clean oblation" (Mal. 1:11). By these words the prophet Malachy, several centuries before Christ, foretold the institution and the offering of the holy Sacrifice of the Mass in the whole world, and in every part of the world. The Sacrifice of the Mass is the Sacrifice which Jesus Christ instituted in His Church to recall, to continue, to perpetuate

and apply to men the sacrifice of Himself which He offered on the Cross for the Redemption of mankind. On the cross Jesus offered Himself as Victim to His heavenly Father in the place of guilty mankind, and superabundantly paid all their debts to God. By His Sacrifice He gave infinite honor and thanksgiving to God, atoned for all the sins of men, and obtained for them all necessary graces. But in order to profit each individual man, the effects, or the merits of the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross have to be applied to each one, just as water, however great its quantity, will not cleanse us, unless we wash ourselves with it, and food will not benefit us, if we do not eat it. The merits and the blood of Jesus once offered by Him for us on the cross, are applied individually through the Sacraments and the holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

The New Law, that is, the religion, or the Church, established by Jesus Christ, to be a perfect religion, a religion worthy of God, must have a sacrifice, a perfect sacrifice, in order to fulfill properly all the figures of the ancient sacrifices. Like the New Law itself, this sacrifice must be everywhere and perpetually offered. Our divine Savior offered Himself a sacrifice on the cross only once, and in one place only. On the cross He was both the Priest and

the Victim. There can be no sacrifice without a priest to offer it, for sacrifice and priesthood are inseparable. The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross is *the Sacrifice of the New Law;* but it is not the only form of this Sacrifice, for St. Paul declares that "Jesus Christ is *forever* a priest according to the order of Melchisedech. This the Lord hath sworn, and shall not repent" (Ps. 109:4). But if Jesus Christ is "a priest *forever*" He must not cease offering sacrifice; but since, after dying on the cross, He rose again to die no more (Rom. 6:9), He, therefore, continues to offer His sacrifice forever in some other manner. In what manner? "*According to the order of Melchisedech,*" that is, in an unbloody manner, under the form or appearances, of bread and wine, and this constantly, perpetually. And this He does in the holy Sacrifice of the Mass. This Sacrifice is unbloody; it is, moreover, infinite, for Jesus Christ being God-man, cannot, like Melchisedech, offer mere bread and wine, which was a mere figure, but must offer a Sacrifice worthy of His eternal Priesthood, and worthy of the perfect and divine religion He founded; and this Sacrifice or Victim which He offered, is Himself, the "Living Bread come down from heaven" (John 6:41). It is identically the same Sacrifice

as that which He offered on the cross, for in the Mass, as on the cross, Jesus Christ is Himself both the Priest and the Victim, although the manner of offering is different. On the cross Jesus Christ personally, in His human nature, offered or sacrificed Himself, and actually died for mankind. In the Mass Jesus Christ as priest is represented and personated by the priest who celebrates the Mass. He is also the real Victim offered in the Mass under the appearances of bread and wine, and dies in the Mass, not a physical, but a mystical death, when the species or appearances of bread and wine are consumed by the priest at Holy Communion. The Sacrifice of the Cross and the Sacrifice of the Mass are *essentially the same,* for in both the Priest and the Victim is Jesus Christ Himself, the Son of God made man. Therefore, like the Sacrifice of the Cross, the Sacrifice of the Mass is of infinite value, apart from the celebrant's holiness or unworthiness. The Mass, like the Sacrifice of the Cross, which it perfectly represents, continues and applies to men, most perfectly fulfills the four-fold object of divine worship and sacrifice, and consequently gives infinite honor and thanksgiving to God, fully atones for the sins of men and deserves for them all necessary graces and divine assistance. Moreover, Jesus Christ,

being Priest for the whole Church, daily offers, by the ministry of the priests, His representatives in the Mass, the perfect Sacrifice (of Himself), as foretold by the Prophet Malachy, "in every place from the rising of the sun even to the going down, there is sacrifice and there is offered to My name a clean oblation" (1:11), applying thereby to men the merits and fruits of His death on the Cross. The Sacrifice of the Mass is, then, like a constant Redemption for mankind.

Protestantism has no sacrifice, and has therefore no priesthood; it is consequently powerless to redeem and sanctify souls; it does not own the merits of Jesus Christ, and is powerless to apply them to the salvation of men; therefore it cannot be the Church of Jesus Christ, nor continue His work among men.

In the Sacrifice of the Mass we possess the means of giving infinite honor to God. All rational creatures are bound to honor God as their Creator and their Lord, as their chief End. All the honor which all rational creatures combined are able to give to God, is infinitely less than the honor that is due to Him and that He deserves. The Sacrifice of the Mass, however, gives to God all the honor that is due to Him, that is infinite honor, for in the Mass

the Priest is Jesus Christ, the Son of God Himself, the Victim also is Jesus Christ, for the celebrant merely represents and personates Jesus Christ; and the heavenly Father to whom the Sacrifice of the Mass is offered, accepts the Sacrifice of His divine Son *as our own,* for He has given us Jesus Christ as our Redeemer, as our Brother, as the Head of the body, the Church, of which we are members. The members of the body of Christ participate in all that their Head does and possesses.

In the Sacrifice of the Mass we possess the surest means of obtaining happiness in time and in eternity. We stand in need of God's blessing, His grace, His forgiveness of the temporal and eternal punishments we owe Him for our sins. The Sacrifice of the Mass is the most powerful means, not only of giving God the honor due Him, but also of propitiating Him for our sins and obtaining His forgiveness, and also of appropriately thanking Him for all His benefits, and of obtaining all the graces and benefits we need in this life, and endless happiness in the next. For all these benefits we can give and pay God an infinite price in the Sacrifice of the Mass, in which His divine Son Jesus Christ is both Priest and Victim.

Who participate in the fruits of the Sacrifice of

the Mass? In general, the whole Church participates in every Mass that is celebrated in the world; the triumphant Church in heaven receives therefrom an increase of glory by reflection from God; the suffering Church in purgatory receives an alleviation of its pains; and the militant Church on earth receives an increase of grace and strength. Moreover, all those who are baptized, even if they be in error, receive therefrom actual grace, earthly blessings; extraordinary favors are bestowed thereby on individuals, and even unbelievers and the heathen derive certain benefits therefrom.

Who are the special participants in the fruits of the Sacrifice of the Mass? First, all who are directly concerned in its celebration, such as: the priest celebrating, the server, those for whose intention the Mass is celebrated, those to whom it is specially applied, all for whom the priest makes a "memento" in so far as God wills, and who assist corporally or in spirit at the Mass. Every Catholic should consider it a duty of charity to have, at least occasionally, Masses said for the living and the dead, for himself, or his special intentions or needs, such as, for his perseverance, for strength in temptation, for overcoming a bad habit, for cure of an illness, for the grace of a good death, for the

conversion of sinners in general, or of certain sinners, for light and strength to know and follow his vocation, for his parents, relatives, friends, benefactors, either living or dead, for souls in purgatory.

How should sinners hear Mass, in order to derive benefit therefrom? The Sacrifice of the Mass is a powerful means of converting the sinner, for it is a memorial of the Incarnation of the Son of God, of His Redemption of mankind, the application of the merits of His Passion and death on the Cross. The sinner is bound to assist at Holy Mass on all Sundays and on all Holydays of obligation, for such is the precept of God's holy Church. The sinner should assist at Mass in a penitential spirit as he would have assisted at the Savior's death on the Cross, had he been present. In the beginning of the Mass he should interiorly join the priest in making an humble and sorrowful confession of his sins to God, with a firm resolution to give up sin, to go to confession and amend his life. He should also feel grateful to God for His longanimity in his regard, and for the satisfaction Jesus Christ offered by His Passion and death for his sins, and earnestly beseech God to enable him by His powerful grace

to give up his sins and his evil habits, and to persevere until death in the amendment of his life.

On the other hand, the just should assist at Mass with a lively faith, as if they were actually present on Calvary when Jesus was dying on the Cross, bearing in mind, that the Mass is the memorial, the continuation and application of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross. They should also humble themselves, confessing their sins to God and begging His mercy, with the resolution of dying rather than to deliberately offend Him. They ought repeatedly to make acts of thanksgiving to God, acts of the love of God, offer themselves to God, and resolve to hear Mass daily, if possible. They should also pray to God to grant them the graces and favors of which they stand in need, and recommend to Him those for whom they should pray. The prayers and petitions we make during Mass are far more powerful and more pleasing to God, than those we make at other times, because in the Mass they are united to those of Jesus Christ, who then on the altar as our Victim, prays for all who assist at the Mass. Hence through Jesus Christ our prayers are presented to God during Mass, and will be more surely granted.

How often should we hear Mass? First, we must hear Mass, under pain of mortal sin, on all Sundays and all Holydays of obligation. On these days we are bound to hear a whole Mass. He who willfully, or through sheer carelessness, comes late to Mass on these days, commits a sin; surely a mortal sin, if he comes after the Offertory has begun; if he leaves the Church without necessity on the aforesaid days, he also commits a sin; a mortal sin if it is before the Communion and he does not return before the end of the Mass.

Secondly, it is very useful and advisable to hear Mass as often as possible, even daily. Those who are able to hear Mass every day, but through indifference or sloth neglect this pious practice, lose all the benefits and graces attached to the devout assistance at daily Mass; they refuse to God the honor they would offer Him by such assistance; they are ungrateful to our divine Savior, who, in His infinite love for all mankind, instituted this holy Sacrifice as the memorial and the application of the fruits of His Passion and death, and as the channel of abundant graces, especially for those who assist at Mass. These persons show also a disregard for our holy Mother the Church, which prescribes its daily celebration; they also fail in their

duty to their neighbor, whom they should endeavor to lead to God by their good example. In fine, they do great injury to themselves, by depriving themselves of the many great graces and benefits they could obtain by daily assisting at Mass; and these very graces may be for some the very graces on which depends their keeping out of sin, their perseverance and their eternal salvation.

Some do not hear Mass every day, under the pretext of being too busy, of having no time. Let us seriously consider that salvation is our all-important business, and that it behooves us to make sure of it by all the means in our power. One of the most powerful means of salvation is the daily devout assistance at Mass. How many fervent Catholics, who are as busy as almost any one can possibly be, who yet find time to go daily to church to hear Mass! What others can do, we also can do, if we seriously try, for "where there is *a will,* there also is *a way.*" *Rise earlier* in the morning, and *retire earlier* to rest at night. Let us remember how many faults we daily commit and must atone for, how many dangers and temptations daily beset our path, how many graces and benefits we daily need from God, and for how many we owe thanks to God, and how much honor God deserves from

us! What better means have we for doing all this than to assist devoutly at holy Mass every day!

"In every Mass," says St. Thomas, "we can find again the same fruit, the same benefits, which Jesus Christ secured for mankind by dying on the cross on Good Friday."

"The Mass," says St. Francis de Sales, "is the abyss of divine mercy, the fountain of divine love, the most precious means of obtaining divine grace."

"On the days we hear Mass devoutly," says St. John Chrysostom, "we receive the divine blessing on all we do."

## XIII

### HOLY COMMUNION

"God," says the Royal Prophet, "hath made a remembrance of His wonderful works, being a merciful and gracious Lord; He hath given food to them that fear Him" (Ps. 110:4, 5). The Blessed Eucharist is the summary of all the wonders wrought by God. It surpasses all the works of the creation, for under the appearances of bread and wine Jesus Christ is really present as God and man. The Eucharist surpasses the works of the Redemption, for it is not only a sacrifice equal to and identical with that of the Cross, since it is its repetition, continuation, perpetuation and application, but it is also the food of our souls, uniting us most intimately with Him and rendering us "partakers of the divine nature" itself, says St. Peter (I. 1:2). It is, indeed, the "remembrance" of all that God has done for us.

The Eucharist is the most excellent gift that God can bestow upon us. The excellence of a gift de-

pends, first, on the dignity of the giver. In the Eucharist Jesus Christ Himself is the Giver. How greatly should we appreciate even the least gift from such a Giver! Secondly, the excellence of a gift depends on the gift itself. The Eucharist is so great a gift, that none greater, or even so great, can be found, for the Eucharist is Jesus Christ Himself; and although He is almighty, He cannot bestow a greater gift than Himself. Thirdly, the excellence of a gift depends on the affection that prompts the gift. Does not our divine Savior Himself say: "Greater love than this no man hath, than that he lay down his life for his friends?" (John 15:13.) But Jesus Christ has not only manifested this *greater* love for us who were His enemies, for we were all sinners, by dying for us the most ignominious death on the cross; but He loved us so tenderly, that He died thus, in order to be able to give us His own flesh and blood as the food of our souls, and thereby most intimately and inseparably unite Himself with us, for there is no union more close and inseparable than that of our food and ourselves. Finally, the excellence of a gift depends on its wonderful effects. The intimate union of our soul with Jesus Christ in Holy Communion renders us, as we have seen, "partakers of

the divine nature." Hence we become thereby enlightened in the mysteries of our holy religion, as were the two disciples going to Emmaus on the day of the resurrection; it bestows on us heavenly joys, purifies us of the stains of human weakness and frailty, arms and strengthens us to combat our passions, and renders us generous in the service of God, as we can learn from the example of the early Christians and martyrs; finally, it strengthens us in the practice of virtue and secures to us eternal life.

What excess of goodness and love does not the Son of God manifest in Holy Communion for us, poor, frail and sinful creatures! He comes to dwell in us, that we also may dwell in Him. "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me and I in him." This is not intended as a *transitory* visit on His part, for He intends it as a permanent visit, as an inseparable union, just as the union between our body and its food admits of no separation, for such is the prayer Jesus addresses to His heavenly Father: "That they may be one as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me" (John 17:22, 23).

Why this intimate union between Jesus and us? That by living in us, He may become our spiritual life and sanctify and strengthen us; that He may

kindle divine love in us together with zeal for the divine glory, and that we may have the pledge of a glorious resurrection and eternal life. "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6: 55). How many favors may we not expect from Jesus Christ, who gives Himself to us in Holy Communion, in order to enrich us with His gifts and to promote the work of our salvation! How wonderful the effects of Holy Communion in so many virgins, so many penitents, so many martyrs, so many confessors of the faith, who practised heroic virtue, overcame the fiercest assaults of their own passions, of the world and of the evil spirits, who performed great austerities, and underwent the most cruel torments human ingenuity ever devised, in order to remain faithful to God until death! Why do we not find in the various sects, as in the Catholic Church, individuals heroically devoting themselves to a life of poverty, chastity and obedience, in order to serve, *for the love of God,* the poor, the aged, the orphans, and to care for those afflicted with every kind of contagious and repulsive diseases, even leprosy, and for the outcasts of society, and performing all these works of Christian charity with as great care and tenderness,

as if they performed them for Jesus Christ Himself? Whence do these devoted religious and missionaries derive their strength, their heroic charity? From frequent Holy Communion, which unites them most intimately with our divine Savior, and imparts His very life to them, and enables them to say with St. Paul: "I live, not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). How ardently we should long for Holy Communion, the greatest treasure Jesus has left us on earth! What do not men undertake to acquire wealth, learning, influence, office, fame and to enjoy pleasures! But in Holy Communion we have something infinitely greater, better and more precious! How eagerly we should profit by every opportunity of receiving Holy Communion! Magdalen, being told that Jesus called her, "arose at once" and went to Him (John 11:29). Zacheus, when Jesus called him down from the tree he had climbed, saying to him: "It behooveth Me to stay this day at thy house," came down at once "and he received Him with joy" (Luke 19:6). Our divine Savior calls every one of us, as He did Magdalen and Zacheus: "Come eat My bread and drink the wine which I have mingled for you" (Prov. 9:5). "I am the bread of life. . . . If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever" (John 6:48, 52).

Every Catholic is obliged to receive Holy Communion *at least* once a year and that during the Easter season. He who neglects to fulfill this obligation, not only is guilty of mortal sin, but is even *liable* to be excluded from membership of the Church, and to be no longer considered as a Catholic. On the other hand, a good, practical and fervent Catholic, who is zealous for his salvation and really dearly loves God, will go to Holy Communion as often as he can. Let us bear in mind that it is the will of Jesus Christ Himself, that we should frequently receive Holy Communion, for He says: "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever. . . . Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath everlasing life" (John 6: 52, 54, 55). Mark the present tense our Lord uses. He does not say: "If any man has eaten," nor "Except you have eaten," nor "He that hath eaten," but He uses the present tense, "If any man eat," etc., to denote a habit, the habitual or frequent receiving of Holy Communion, and *it is to such a habit* that He promises life everlasting, or salvation.

The early Christians understood this well. Whenever it was possible, they were wont to re-

ceive Holy Communion every day. The great Council of Trent expresses the wish that priests should celebrate Mass every day, that the faithful should, if possible, daily assist at Mass, and receive Holy Communion whenever they assist at this most holy Sacrifice, that is, every day, if possible. All the Fathers of the Church recommend and urge all the faithful, whatever be their state of life, to receive Holy Communion frequently, or even daily. St. John Chrysostom expects every one to receive Holy Communion whenever he assists at Mass. St. Jerome says that it is a real happiness for him to be able to testify, that in Rome and in Spain the faithful were accustomed to receive Holy Communion daily. St. Augustine, in his explanation of the "Our Father" says: "Holy Communion is the 'daily bread' we pray God to 'give us this day,' that is, every day. Know, therefore," he concludes, "that it behooves you daily to receive Holy Communion. Live, then, so as to be worthy to receive Jesus Christ every day."

Frequent and even daily Communion is the ardent wish of Jesus Christ and His Church for all those who can possibly receive it daily. Therefore, our late Pope, the saintly Pius X approved on December 20, 1905, a decree of the Sacred Congregation

of the Council concerning daily Holy Communion, in which we read the following passages: "1. Frequent and daily Communion, being most earnestly desired by Christ our Lord and by the Catholic Church, should be accessible to all the faithful, of whatever rank or condition of life, so that no one who is in the state of grace, and who approaches the Holy Table with an upright and devout intention, can be lawfully hindered therefrom. 2. A right intention is had by him who goes to Holy Communion, not out of routine, or vain glory, or human respect, but in order to please God, or to be more closely united to Him by charity, and to make use of this divine remedy to oppose to his weakness and defects. 3. Although it is far more expedient that those who frequently or daily receive Holy Communion, should be free from venial sins, especially from those that are fully deliberate, and also from affection to such sins, nevertheless, *it suffices* that they be free from mortal sin, and be resolved never more to commit mortal sin; if they are thus sincerely resolved, daily communicants cannot but gradually get rid of their venial sins and of all affection for the same. 4. The communicants should be careful to make a serious preparation for Holy Communion, and, after Holy Com-

munion, a suitable thanksgiving according to each one's strength, circumstances and duties. 5. Each one should ask his confessor's advice concerning frequent and daily Communion."

So long as the early Christians were faithful in the practice of daily Communion, they were fervent in the service of God and models of virtue. Their daily Holy Communion enabled them cheerfully to overcome temptation, to bear every trial, to make every sacrifice, and to undergo torments and even death for their holy faith. But when, in the course of time, they gradually became remiss in this holy practice, their fervor also relaxed, and they grew cold and indifferent in the service of God, and began to live like the pagans around them.

Our own interest requires frequent Holy Communion on our part, for we are weak, spiritually infirm and helpless of ourselves, often sorely tempted. There is no better means of acquiring spiritual health and strength, than to partake daily, if possible, or at least frequently, of the Bread of Angels, the Bread of the strong, for we thereby participate in the power, in the virtues of the Son of God; for then we shall live, like St. Paul, by the life of Jesus: "I live now not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20).

On the other hand, he who never or but seldom receives Holy Communion, is spiritually weak, and grows daily weaker and weaker, and may apply these words of the psalmist to himself: "I am smitten as grass, and my heart is withered, because I forgot (neglected) to eat my bread" (Ps. 101 : 5). He easily yields to temptations, for he has not the strength to resist and overcome them, because he fails to feed his soul with the fortifying "living Bread from heaven." Hence he soon becomes the slave of some evil habit, which gradually grows into a second nature and leads him to perdition!

To conclude, "He that loves Jesus Christ much," says St. Augustine, "eats often of the Bread of life, and he that eats often of it, loves Jesus Christ daily more and more."

## XIV

### THE COMMUNION OF CHILDREN

When children have attained the age of discretion, that is, when they have come to the use of reason, they are responsible for their actions, because they can then distinguish between right and wrong. They are then obliged to keep the commandments of God and the precepts of the Church. Children come to the use of reason generally about the age of seven years, some somewhat sooner, others somewhat later. They are then capable of doing good and of doing evil, or committing sin. From this it follows that children who are about seven years old, more or less, are bound, under pain of grievous sin to hear Mass on Sundays and Holy-days of obligation, to keep the abstinence on the days prescribed, to go to confession at least once a year and to receive Holy Communion during the Easter time. The Holy Council of Trent condemns those who deny the latter obligation: "If any one shall deny that all and each of Christ's faithful of both

sexes are bound, when they have attained the years of discretion, to communicate every year at least at Easter, in accordance with the precept of Holy Mother Church, let him be anathema."

To receive Holy Communion children need not be perfectly instructed in all the doctrines of the Church, for St. Thomas says expressly: "When children begin to have some use of reason, so that they can conceive some devotion towards the Holy Eucharist, they may then be given Holy Communion." Let us bear in mind that the precept of receiving Holy Communion is not merely a Church law, but also a *divine* law, for Jesus expressly declared: "Amen, amen I say unto you: Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink of His blood, you shall not have life in you" (John 6: 54). Therefore the theologian Vasquez is correct in saying: "As soon as a child attains the use of reason, he is obliged *by the divine law,* so that not even the Church can dispense him from obeying it." "When a child is capable of wrong-doing, that is, of committing mortal sin, he is then subject to the precepts of confession and, consequently, of Holy Communion," concludes St. Antoninus.

The Sacred Congregation "of the Council" on March 25th, 1910, decided that "Boys and girls are

to be admitted to Holy Communion, when they come to the age of discretion, or attain the use of reason."

A few months later, July 15th, 1910, the Sacred Congregation of the "Discipline of the Sacraments," in order that children of tender years may become attached to Jesus Christ, live His life and obtain protection against the dangers of corruption, *prescribed* the following Rule to be everywhere observed in admitting children to first Holy Communion:

"I. The age of discretion required both for Confession and Communion is the time when the child begins to reason, that is about the seventh year, sometimes after, sometimes even before. From this time on the obligation of satisfying the precept of both Confession and Communion begins.

"II. Both for first Confession and first Communion a complete and perfect knowledge of Christian Doctrine is not necessary. The child will, however, be obliged gradually to learn the whole Catechism according to its intellectual ability.

"III. The knowledge of Christian Doctrine required in children for first Holy Communion is that they understand, according to their capacity, the mysteries of Faith which are necessary as a means

of salvation, that they be able to distinguish the Eucharist from common and material bread, and also approach the Sacred Table with the devotion becoming their age.

"IV. The obligation of the precept of Confession and Communion which rests upon the child, falls back principally upon those in whose care they are, that is, parents, confessors, teachers and their pastor. According to the Roman Catechism, it belongs to the father, however, or to the person taking his place, as also to the confessor, to admit the child to first Holy Communion. . . .

"VI. Those who have the care of children should use all diligence, so that after first Communion the children shall *often* approach the Holy Table, *even daily if possible,* as Jesus Christ and our Mother the Church desire, and that they do this with a devotion becoming their age. They should bear in mind their most important duty, by which they are obliged to have the children attend the public instructions in Catechism; otherwise they are bound to supply this religious instruction in some other way."

"All these resolutions (regulations) of the Eminent Fathers, the Cardinals of this Sacred Congregation have been approved by our Most Holy

Father Pope Pius X in an audience given on the seventh day of August, 1910, and he has commanded the present Decree to be published and promulgated. He has commanded all the Ordinaries (Bishops of dioceses) to make known this present Decree not only to the pastors and the clergy, but also to the faithful, to whom it shall be read yearly at Easter time in the vernacular language.

" The Ordinaries themselves shall have, at the end of every five years (together with the other affairs of their diocese) to give an account of the observance of this Decree to the Holy See."

The main points of this Decree have been included in the New Code of the Canon Law of the Church, which will take effect on Pentecost Sunday, May 19th, 1918. In Canon 854 we find the following regulations concerning the Communion of children:

" 1. The Holy Eucharist shall not be administered to children of tender age who have no knowledge of it, nor any relish for it.

" 2. As to children in danger of death, who are able to discern the Body of Christ from ordinary food, and to adore it reverently, the Holy Eucharist may and should be administered to them.

" 3. Those children who have attained the age

of reason and are not in danger of death, in order to receive Holy Communion, are required to know at least those mysteries of faith, of which the knowledge is necessary for salvation, and to make a careful preparation according to their capacity.

"4 and 5. The parish priest is in duty bound to watch (in order to prevent abuses), and if he deems it prudent, to institute an examination, in order that the children be not admitted to receive the Holy Eucharist, unless they have attained the age of reason and are sufficiently disposed, and he should also take care, that those children who have the use of reason and are sufficiently disposed, should, as soon as possible, be nourished with this divine food."

To make the above No. 3 plain it will be well to recall which are the mysteries of faith, the knowledge of which is necessary to salvation.

The Truths, or Mysteries of Faith, Which Every Man Must Know to Be Saved: There is but one God; He created the world and all it contains out of nothing; in God there are three distinct divine Persons, equal in all things, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; God the Son became man on earth, suffered and died to redeem all men. After death the good will be rewarded in heaven forever, and the bad will be forever punished in

hell. Moreover, those who go to confession or to Holy Communion, must know what is confession, and what is Holy Communion.

Let us now return to the Communion of children. Frequent worthy Communion is the most powerful means of keeping souls pure and chaste; it is the most efficient preventative from falling into or of remaining in evil habits. This is one of the chief reasons why the above Decree of Pope Pius X was issued, for its observance will enable Catholic children to preserve their innocence, and to persevere therein later on in life, amid the dangers of corruption that abound in the world. Let us now recall how our divine Savior, when He was on earth, loved little children because of their purity and innocence. Read the Gospel of St. Mark (10: 12–16): "They brought to Jesus young children, that He might touch them. And the disciples rebuked those that brought them. When Jesus saw this, He was much displeased, and saith to them: Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not. For such is the kingdom of God. Amen I say to you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter into it. And embracing them and laying His hands upon them, He blessed them." Let us heed the

express will of Jesus Christ, and beware of keeping the little children designated by the Vicar of Christ and His holy Church, from going to receive Jesus Christ in Holy Communion.

We have of late years especially many examples of the wonderful attraction of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist for little children. Who has not read the wonderful life of little Nellie Horgen, and thanked God for the admirable attraction and love of Jesus in the Eucharist in that child, who was not yet five years old, when Jesus in the Eucharist called her to Himself? For the edification of the reader we will conclude this article by another example of the love of the Eucharistic Savior for little children.

### GUSTAVE MARIA BRUNI

On February 10th, 1911, there died in Turin in Italy a boy under eight years of age, whose ardent love of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist had won for him the beautiful name of "the little Seraph of Jesus in the Sacred Host." Gifted with a wonderful, precocious mind, he never forgot what had once been taught him. He learnt to read almost by himself during an illness, when he was only four years old. At school he was always at the head

of his class, and was dearly loved and considered as a superior child both by his classmates and the older students.

His pious mother had consecrated him before his birth to Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, and his whole life converged towards Jesus in the Eucharist, for the Real Presence was the ardent desire of his infancy, and the strength, the joy and the happiness of his young life, and his consolation in sickness.

Gustave Maria Bruni was born May 6th, 1903, and baptized on the following day. The next time he was brought out of his home was also to the church, where he remained perfectly quiet during the hour his mother spent there to thank God for giving her a son. From that time whenever he was brought to church, all who beheld him could not help remarking his joyful countenance constantly gazing towards the tabernacle, never turning his eyes away from it or manifesting either weariness or impatience. His first words were, " Jesus, good Jesus." He said the rosary already when scarcely two years old. His great pleasure was to accompany his mother to an early Mass, during which he showed constant recollection, for it was manifest that he already possessed a wonderful comprehen-

sion of the Sacrament of love; whenever any one asked him, "Where is Jesus," he would reply: "Here in my heart and in the tabernacle in the church." When he was three years and four months old, he once followed his mother to the Communion table, and when the priest had passed him by, he said weeping: "I wish also to go to Communion." He felt very much grieved at not being permitted to do so. Every morning he would express his ardent longing for the day when he would be admitted to his first Holy Communion. Not content with daily assisting at Mass with his mother, he would return to the church again during the day to visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and begin his visit by making a Spiritual Communion.

He had a profound veneration for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and for priests. He would salute every priest he met. Being at the age of four years already a pupil of the Divine Heart Institute, he would not attend the class of "Deportment"; when his mother asked him why, he replied: "It is useless for me to learn how to dance, for I wish to be a priest." Whenever he was ill, he would consider his sickness as a visit of our divine Savior. When four years old, he had a severe attack of pneumonia; he said to the physician: "I would

be as glad to die as to live, for I could then go straight to heaven where I would enjoy to be with Jesus."

Being of a lively and ardent disposition, he had often to struggle much to overcome himself; but when he was told that a victory over his character, over his feelings was the best proof of love he could give to Jesus Christ in the Blessed Eucharist, he would make every effort to conquer himself. It was then a consoling sight to see that little boy hastening to tell his ghostly Father of his success in self-mastery, and of his resolve to conquer all the enemies of his soul, out of love for the most Holy Sacrament, which he so ardently longed to receive.

After he had reached the age of five years he was often heard to exclaim: "See how men seek every means to gratify themselves! How few think of eternity awaiting them! How few think of good Jesus! Poor men, how ungrateful they are!" He had Jesus constantly in his thoughts, and nothing could interrupt his interior recollection. He was fond of play; but after enjoying some games with his schoolmates, he could at once pass over to serious meditation. He studied assiduously and conscientiously. Before beginning a composition,

he would address our divine Savior: "O Jesus, I recommend my work to Thee, and I wish to perform it for Thy glory." He considered the reading of papers and magazines "loss of time for children," and would devote his free time to reading the Lives of the Saints and other spiritual books. When thus engaged he felt in his proper element, and skillfully analyzed what he was reading.

At the age of five years he had a severe attack of varioloid. Though cognizant of his state, he strove to calm the fears of his parents, saying: "I have yet to make my first Holy Communion before dying, and oh, how happy I shall be to suffer after that, whenever I shall be sick, for I shall then be able to receive Jesus Christ in sickness!"

It was found out that Gustave knew the catechism very well even before he had actually studied it. His life was, indeed supernatural, for it seemed that there were no mysteries for him, for God Himself had been his teacher. He was always more and more consumed by the desire of receiving Jesus Christ. A priest brought him to be examined by the saintly Don Rua, the successor of Venerable Don Bosco as superior-general of the Salesians. Don Rua said to him: "My dear little boy, if I said to you, that the Host, after the Con-

secration, is only consecrated bread, would I be right!" "Oh, no, Father!" Gustave replied emphatically; "after the Consecration the Host is no longer bread; it is Jesus, and Jesus entirely." Don Rua admitted him to his first Communion on May 23rd, 1909. It was for him an ecstasy of love. He again received Holy Communion the following day, and from that time his only suffering was to be unable to unite himself every day to Jesus. He never failed to receive Holy Communion whenever he was permitted.

Twenty days after his first Communion he received the abundance of the gifts of the Holy Ghost in the Sacrament of Confirmation. Thenceforth his life consisted chiefly in preparation for Holy Communion and in thanksgiving after it. Often he would say: "Jesus is so good and loves me so much."

His soul, consumed, as it were, by divine love, overflowed also with the love of his neighbor; he prayed with the utmost fervor for his parents, relatives and friends, and even for all strangers. Whenever he met "a poor gentleman," as he was wont to call beggars, and his little purse was empty, he would say a prayer, that the beggar might meet some charitably disposed person. When he saw

small children playing in the street with no one to watch over them, he would pray that they should not meet with any accident or injury. His prayers were always heard, for Jesus would grant him all he prayed for, especially in the last months of his life.

After his first Communion it became always more and more clear to him that he should become a priest in the Salesian Congregation, and when some one would allude in his presence, to the sorrow he would then experience in leaving his parents and family, he would reply: "I will then have Jesus as much as I desire, and with Jesus I shall have all." But God was satisfied with his desire, for, as we shall see, He found Gustave already ripe for heaven.

Gustave had a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin and a great compassion for the souls in purgatory. Whenever he saw a funeral passing by, he would ask to be permitted to accompany it for some distance, for it was the custom to go on foot to the cemetery. On such occasions he failed not to pray fervently for the deceased. For him death had no terrors; he considered it as the soul's return to its country. Such was the view he took of death from the age of four years. He nevertheless,

keenly felt the death of those that were dear to him. The death of Don Rua was a hard trial for him, but he bore it calmly as he did all his other trials.

Being very delicate physically, he was often confined to his room by sickness; he rejoiced over this, saying: "I feel Jesus nearer to me, and now I need to think only on heaven." It happened several times that he obtained a temporary suspension of his fever to enable him to go to Holy Communion, and after his return home, the fever would at once come back and resume its course.

On January 18th, 1911, he called on the Father Rector of the "Social Institute," thanked him for all he had done for him, and hinted that he considered his mission on earth as now about to end. Two days later he fell ill of pneumonia, and at once requested that the priest be sent for to hear his confession and give him Holy Communion. In his delirium he exclaimed: "My Lady, my beautiful Lady, come!" After coming to himself, he said he had seen a beautiful Lady in white, who had come to take him on a long journey. The Salesian superior, after his long visit to the sick boy, said to his mother: "Gustave no longer belongs to us, for he has already attained the height of perfection." Gustave, in fact, no longer had any earthly

desires. He would often repeat: "The only wish I have is to do the will of God." The word *fiat* (God's will be done) was his constant prayer during the long days and nights of extreme suffering. He would then press his crucifix over his heart, thinking only on his divine Savior, speaking of Him only and desiring Him only.

He had some one to read to him pious thoughts and the Life of St. Alphonsus; and he would make long meditations on what had been read to him. For six whole days he remained paralyzed and immovable with his arms extended in the form of a cross, without uttering the least complaint. It was in this position that he received the Holy Viaticum, Extreme Unction and the Papal Blessing, took leave of all the members of his family, made his last recommendations to them, recited frequently ejaculatory prayers, and, after saying in a loud voice, "Blessed be God in His Angels and in His Saints," kissed the Crucifix and fell asleep in the Lord. This occurred on February 10th, the eve of the feast of the "Apparition of Our Lady of Lourdes." The "beautiful Lady in white" had come to take him to the "everlasting wedding feast of the Lord." He was then only seven years, nine months and four days old. His funeral was like

a triumph, for over the grief of all there hovered a great joy. Since then many favors are claimed to have been obtained from God through " that child of benediction."

## XV

### JESUS IN THE EUCHARIST IS WAITING FOR US

1. Before ascending to heaven our divine Savior said to His apostles, to His Church, to all of us: "Behold I am with you all days until the consummation of ages" (Mat. 28:20). Jesus Christ has kept this promise for in the Blessed Eucharist He has ever since remained with those who believe in Him. He is really present day and night on our altars, not only to give Himself to us in Holy Communion, but also to intercede for us with His heavenly Father, to receive our visits, to confer favors upon us and to hear our prayers. So great is His love for men, that He cannot separate Himself from them, for He says: "My delights are to be with the children of men" (Prov. 8:31). In fact, so great is His love for us, that, in order to remain always in our midst on our altars, He exposes Himself to horrible outrages from unbelievers, heretics, sinners, and even to the irrever-

ences, ingratitude, indifference and neglect of many who boast of their faith, of their love for Him! "It is for us," says Ven. Father Champagnat, "that during nineteen centuries our divine Savior has remained day and night on our altars, that we may have recourse to Him in all our necessities; and nothing so grieves His divine Heart as our indifference to such a favor, our ingratitude towards His boundless love, and our neglect to visit Him, to ask His blessing and the helps and favors we need. If we knew how profitable the loving visits are to our Eucharistic Savior, we would never let an occasion of visiting Him slip by. The saints understood well, that Jesus Christ is the Source of all grace, and they would, therefore, hasten to visit Him in the Blessed Sacrament in every need, in every difficulty."

"It is certain," says St. Alphonsus, "that of all the pious practices, next to Holy Communion, there is none more agreeable to God and more profitable to us, than to make frequent visits to Jesus Christ dwelling in our tabernacles. We often can obtain more grace in devoutly spending a quarter of an hour before the Blessed Sacrament, than in all the other pious devotions we could perform in a whole day." The saint was so enamored of Jesus in the

Eucharist, that he not only daily visited Him himself, but wrote a most beautiful book of "Visits to the Blessed Sacrament," which is the delight of all who tenderly love Jesus Christ, and which has been translated in nearly every language and has gone through hundreds of editions. Many persons do not make a daily visit to Jesus in the Eucharist, because they do not know what to say to Him. Such persons should make use of the "Book of Visits of St. Alphonsus," and it will teach them very soon how to converse with Jesus Christ, what to say to Him, and how to love Him and save their souls.

If a very dear friend of ours lives in our neighborhood, we often go to see him and converse with him, for we are fond of the company of those we love. But our divine Savior is our best Friend, and no one loves us so much as He. We should, therefore, often visit Him. Wherefore, when you pass a church, when you have leisure, or are in want, in trouble, enter the church to greet Jesus, to show Him your affection, your gratitude. He is always at home, and always has time to attend to you; He is always pleased to see you, to listen to you, to grant you favors. In fact, He is waiting

for you day and night. He wishes, He desires, He longs that you should come to Him and greet Him, and make your wants, your troubles known to Him. He is more anxious to grant you favors than you are to obtain them. Nowhere can you pray better than before the little tabernacle on the altar in which He dwells. When you enter the church to pay Him a visit, Jesus looks at you with love, for He loves you even more than you can love yourself.

What can you, what ought you to say to Him?

"My Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I firmly believe that Thou art really present here in the Blessed Sacrament. Behold, O Lord, I have come to visit Thee. Dearest Jesus, I love Thee with my whole heart. I thank Thee for all that Thou hast done and suffered for me, and for the numberless benefits Thou hast bestowed on me. I am exceedingly sorry for having so often and so grievously offended Thee, O Jesus, forgive me, for I am resolved nevermore to offend Thee, and I will do all in my power to please Thee, to show Thee my love. I long to receive Thee into my soul; but since I cannot now do so in reality, deign to come spiritually into my heart, and to remain therein to-day and during all my life." Then with a true childlike con-

fidence, ask Jesus for all the graces and favors you desire. And before you leave the church, ask Him to bless you and all who are dear to you.

When should you especially visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament? When you are in trouble; when you feel despondent, or melancholy; when you are sorely tried or tempted; when you feel resentment against some one who has offended you or hurt your feelings, when you are disturbed by doubts, or by remorse for your sins; when some misfortune has befallen you or persons dear to you; when you are ill or in any difficulty, go to visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and tell Him all about it, and beseech Him to help you, to enable you to bear all your troubles with patience and resignation, and for His sake. Bear in mind that Jesus is your best Friend, your best Physician, your wisest Counselor, your true and most loving Father, and that there is no ill, no trouble, which He will not remedy, no want which He will not bountifully fill. If you lovingly and confidently visit Him in all your wants, you will be astonished and delighted at the good result of your visit. Say to Him as the leper did: "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean" (Mat. 8:2). "And thou shalt be as the most obedient Son of the Most High, and He will have

mercy on Thee more than a mother" (Eccli. 4:11).

Oh, how we should yearn, like the saints, after Jesus in the Holy Eucharist! "As the hart panteth after the fountains of waters, so my soul panteth after Thee, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God. (I have found) Thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God" (Ps. 83:2–4). Come and visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament! Come taste and see how sweet the Lord is" (Ps. 33:9).

"O how sweet a joy it is," says St. Alphonsus, "to remain, with faith and tender devotion, before an altar on which our Savior resides, and converse familiarly with Him, since He is there for the express purpose of listening to and graciously granting the prayers of those who visit Him! O what a heaven it is to remain there making acts of love to Him, who dwells on our altars, in order to pray for us to His heavenly Father, and to show His boundless love for us, even when we treat Him with indifference and ingratitude!"

2. Spiritual Communion. We should make a Spiritual Communion every time we visit our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament; moreover, we should do the same whenever we assist at Mass and are not

able to receive Holy Communion, for when we see the priest and the communicants receiving Holy Communion, we should be filled with an ardent desire to receive it also, thinking within ourselves: "Oh, if I only could now receive my Savior! If He would only come now into my heart in Holy Communion, how happy it would make me!" If there is such a longing in our heart, let us say to Jesus: "O Jesus, I am sorry for my sins; forgive me; I will never offend Thee more. My Jesus, I believe that Thou art present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love Thee above all things, and I desire to receive Thee into my soul, and since I cannot now do this, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace Thee as if Thou wert already there, and I unite myself wholly to Thee; never let me be ever separated from Thee."

We can make a Spiritual Communion not only in church at Mass, at our Visit, but whenever we wish and wherever we are. The greater our desire and our love for Jesus, the greater also the blessings will Jesus bestow on us.

3. Visit to the Blessed Virgin Mary. St. Alphonsus recommends and exhorts us to make a daily visit to the Blessed Virgin Mary. In his book of the visits to the Blessed Sacrament he adds to

each Visit a short Visit to our Blessed Lady, for, as he says, "we cannot separate Jesus from Mary, nor Mary from Jesus." Jesus is the Author of grace, but Mary is the channel, the distributress of grace. Jesus redeemed us, and in His last will made Mary our Spiritual Mother, and made us Mary's spiritual children. She is, then, not only the Mother of the "Redeemer," but also the "Mother of the redeemed," that is, OUR MOTHER. She is, indeed, the best of mothers, and is more solicitous about our welfare than we ourselves can be. Let us, then, after visiting Jesus in the Sacrament of His love, pay a visit also to our most loving and tender Mother, and after greeting her and thanking her for all she has done for us, let us entreat her to obtain for us from Jesus, by her all-powerful intercession, all the graces and favors we need, especially her help in temptation and the inestimable grace of final perseverance, for she is the Mother of perseverance.

4. BENEDICTION. We all feel happy when a priest, or bishop, gives us his blessing; even careless Catholics kneel devoutly to receive it. What is the reason of this? Because the priest, the bishop, is a representative of Jesus Christ. In the parishes of the majority of my readers, the parishioners fre-

quently have the opportunity of receiving the blessing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ Himself! And yet very many of the parishioners *never* avail themselves of this wonderful favor, for they never assist at Benediction! And these indifferent persons are just the ones who stand in the greatest need of the blessing of God!

At divine service on a Sunday afternoon, or evening, the priest accompanied by the altar boys goes to the altar, which is decorated with flowers and resplendent with lights. He ascends the altar, opens the tabernacle, and between the lights and over the tabernacle, exposes our Eucharistic Savior placed in the golden Ostensorium, or Monstrance. The organ peals forth its melodious and joyful tones, and the choir sings the praises of our Savior in the Sacrament of His love. The priest and the altar boys are kneeling on the altar steps, and all present in church, both old and young, are reverently and devoutly adoring and praying to their Savior, their Lord and God, their heavenly King. And Jesus from His throne looks down graciously and lovingly on His devout adorers! How grand, how solemn and cheering it is then in the House of God! How piously are the hymns sung! How fervently all present pray to Jesus from their inmost hearts!

Yes, for God Himself is there! Wherefore, those who really love Him, come to Him from afar and near to visit Him, to adore Him, to thank Him, to implore His favors, to tell Him their wants, their troubles, and seek relief! At the end of the service, the priest, holding in his hands Jesus Christ in the Monstrance, gives the blessing of Jesus Christ Himself to all present; and they kneeling, bowing their heads and striking their breasts and making the sign of the cross, receive this priceless favor with lively faith, confidence and love.

At the Forty Hours' Exposition those who are in real earnest, anxious to save their souls, will daily visit the Blessed Sacrament, go to confession and Holy Communion and pray fervently for the intentions of our Holy Father the Pope, in order to gain the indulgences and the abundant divine favors of that time of special graces.

P. S. Before concluding these articles on the REAL PRESENCE, may I be permitted to recommend the readers to read, carefully from time to time, books treating of the Blessed Eucharist, for these will strengthen their faith, increase their love for Jesus Christ, and greatly promote their salvation. Among the many useful books treating of this grand and important subject are the following: A short

treatise of *Cardinal Vaughn on "The Sacrifice of the Mass";* a larger work on the same subject by the pious *Father Cochem; "Our Refuge"* by *Rev. A. Sprigler; "The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass Explained"* by *Rev. J. J. Baierl* and *St. Alphonsus' "Visits to the Blessed Sacrament."*

THE END

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